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A LEAF IN THE STORM.

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LITTLE BRIGGS AND I.

BY FITZ-HUGH LUDLOW.

I'M going to give you a bit of autobiography, and when I say that, I don't mean the usual kind. Most people who write their own lives make up for themselves an ideal of perfect living, to which they square their facts. The Rev. Mr. Rhodomontade does not tell how he pulled all the hairs out of his Greek professor's horse's tail, and the Hon. Simon Pure gives us no reminiscences of the day when he cheated at marbles. I've no doubt that Payson got tight, and James Brainerd Taylor stole sweetmeats off the top shelf of his mother's closet; that Benjamin Franklin played hookey, and General Scott cried when he got thrashed. Read their memoirs, and you won't find a stagger or a stained apron, a black mark or a blubber, in the whole of them. If memoirs are meant for a personal puff, this is all very well. If they're for the generation to come after us, it could n't be worse. Many a trembling saint gets demoralized by contemplation of such inaccessible excellence. He feels as if he were reading about another man's having got to New-

port without ever having passed through Massachusetts or Connecticut, Narragansett Bay or Long Island Sound. His idol has the fruits of experience without the experience itself; and, naturally considering him an exceptional case, he gives up the insoluble problem of resembling him. I don't think Rousseau's Confessions exactly the kind of book for boarding-school reading, but for instruction in the conduct of human life it's worth a dozen memoirs of any Mr. Optimus Paragon, written by himself. Let's know where the reefs are, if you *did* get that ugly bump on your keel! So far as we have steered, there's no remarkably plain sailing; if *you*'ve had it all the way, very well; you're in port now; hand your log over to the owners. We, who have plenty of foul weather, are busy with charts, and, when there's a fair spell, find livelier reading in Robinson Crusoe. If you don't like to tell how many mistakes you've made, how rash you've been, how mad, even how mean, — why, you've etymology on your side, for modern autobiography is derived from the fact that it's a man's life as it ought-to-be, and not as it was. In that sense I'm ruled out of your company, for this sketch is no ought-to-be-ography at all.

My name is Ben Thirlwall, and I am the son of rich but honest parents. I never had a wish ungratified until I was twelve years of age. My wish then was to stay on a two-year-old colt which had never been broken. He did not coincide with me, and a vast revelation of the resistances to individual will of which the universe is capable, also of a terrestrial horizon bottom upward, burst upon me during the brief space which I spent in

flying over his head. Picked up senseless, I was carried to the bosom of my family on a wheelbarrow, and awoke to the consciousness that my parents had decided on sending me to boarding-school, — a remedy to this day sovereign in the opinion of all well-regulated parents for all tangential aberrations from the back of a colt or the laws of society.

The principal's name was Barker; and my only clew to his character consisted in overhearing that he was an excellent disciplinarian. I was afraid to ask what that meant, but on reflection concluded it to be a geographical distinction, and, associating him with Mesopotamia or Beloochistan, expected to find him a person of mild manners, who shaved his head, wore a tall hat of dyed sheep's wool, and did a large business in spices with people who visited him on camels in a front yard surrounded by sheds, and having a fountain that played in the middle.

Having read several books of travels, I was corroborated in my view when I learned that Mr. Barker lived at the east, and still further, when, going around Point Judith on the steamboat with my father, I became very sick at the stomach, as all the travellers had done in their first chapter.

I need not say that the reality of Mr. Barker was a very terrible awakening, which contained no lineament of my purple dream save the bastinado. Without distinction of age or season the youths who, as per circular, enjoyed the softening influences of his refined Christian home, rose to the sound of the gong at five A. M., which may have been very nice in a home for the early Chris-

tians, but was reported among the boys to have entirely stopped the growth of Little Briggs. This was a child, whose mother had married again, and whose step-father had felt his duty to his future too keenly to deprive him of the benign influences of Barker any time in the last six years. After rising, we had ten minutes to wash our faces and hands, — a period by the experience of mankind demonstrably insufficient, where the soap is of that kind very properly denominated cast-steel (though purists have a different spelling), and you have to break an inch of ice to get into the available region of your water-pitcher. Chunks, who has since made a large fortune on war-contracts, kept himself in peanuts and four-cent pies for an entire winter session, by selling an invention of his own, which consisted of soap, dissolved in water on the stove during the daytime, put in bottles hooked from the lamp-room by means of a false key, to be carried to bed and kept warm by boys, whose pocket-money and desire for a prompt detergent in the morning were adequate to the disbursement of half a dime a package. I myself took several violent colds from having the glass next my skin during severe nights; but this was nothing so bad as the case of Little Briggs, who, from lack of the half-dime, often came down to prayers with a stripe of yesterday's pencil-black on one side of his nose, and a shaving of soap, which, in the frenzy of despair, he had gouged out of his stony cake, on the other. The state of mind consistent with such a condition of countenance did not favor correct recitation of the tougher names in Deuteronomy; so it can be a cause of surprise to no one, that, when called on at

prayers and prompted by a ridiculous neighbor, Little Briggs sometimes asserted Joshua to have driven out the Hivites and the Amorites, and the Canaanites and the Jebusites, and the Hittites and the Perizzites, and the Moabites and the Mosquito-bites, for which he was regularly sent to bed on Saturday afternoon, as he had no pocket-money to stop, his papa desiring him to learn self-denial young, as he was intended for a missionary; though goodness knows that there was n't enough of him to go round among many heathen.

From this specimen of discipline may be learned the entire Barkerian system of training. I was about to say, "*ex uno disce omnes*," but, as it's the only Latin I remember from the lot which got rubbed into — or rather over — me at Barker's, I'm rather sparing of it, not knowing but I can bring it in somewhere else with better effect. As with the Word of God, so with that of man, — the grand Barkerian idea of how to fix it in a boy's memory was to send him to bed, or excoriate his palm. If religion and polite learning could have been communicated by sheets, like chicken-pox, or blistered into one like the stern but curative cantharides, Mr. Barker's boys would have become the envy of mankind and the beloved of the gods; but not even Little Briggs died young from the latter or any other cause, which speaks volumes for his constitution.

Even at Barker's, boys grew up, somehow; and in process of time I became fourteen years of age. I recollect that epoch well, for it was marked by my first sorrow. I learned to sympathize, at least half-way, with Little Briggs. I lost a good and indulgent father,

though I did not get one of an opposite character, nor indeed any at all. When I came back to Barker's, a few weeks after the funeral, Little Briggs looked at me with peculiar interest, and made me a timid offer of baked chestnuts.

"I had on as good clothes as that, when I was in mourning, — real bombazine with jet buttons," said Little Briggs, waxing confidential during second recess.

"I wish I was in mourning now. Do you feel very bad?"

My heart rose in my throat.

"Of course you do. But *I* would n't. I'm different, you know; my dad's not the real thing, — only imitation. If he should die I would n't cry — no more — no more than — than —" Little Briggs cast about for some particularly stern and tearless comparison, and finally hit on the not very felicitous one of "that pump," which just at the moment was yielding water freely to the solicitations of Mr. Barker's hired man, Yankee. Yankee was pumping for the cook, between whom and himself there were supposed to be still more romantic love-passages, wide credence having been given among Barker's boys to the theory that she was the daughter of a man with countless millions, who had turned her out of doors on account of her love for a pedler of humble birth; upon which she and the pedler, not to be separated, had come to take service at Barker's. Maturer selfishness than ours would have propitiated her with reference to her post-obit expectations, but the blandishments of Barker's boys were directed solely to the more immediate particular of pies. As we passed Yankee and

the cook, the latter glanced at Little Briggs's threadbare knees, and said compassionately to her companion, —

“Poor thing! he don't look as if he was much sot on by his family!”

“Wall, naow,” replied Yankee, with a drawl and twinkle, “I should say, to look at him, that they 'd all on 'em sot on him to once, and tol'ble heavy tew!”

Little Briggs heard him, and made what within my experience was his first self-assertion. He rushed at the pump, with his face as pale as death and his lip quivering, drew back his foot, paused, and —

“See here, you old hog,” said Little Briggs, “if that was n't the cook's pail, I 'd — I 'd kick it over!”

“They're all hogs,” he added, as he walked away with me, leaving Yankee petrified by his exceptional demonstration, “everybody's hogs at Barker's. Barker's the biggest; he hain't got any more feeling than a bedpost. When your father died, the fellers all signed a paper asking for a half-holiday, and Pete Gilbert took it up to him; and he went right on with school just the same. Don't I wish I was big enough to break his head! I 'd run away this minute — if I 'd only got anywhere to run to!”

Whether, as a result of his first bold stand, or from the expansive influence of having found in me something like a common ground of human sympathy, Little Briggs, to the surprise of everybody, began growing; — so rapidly, in fact, that within a few months he confided to me as many as three letters, signed, “Yours, T. Mixer,” and written in a stiff, invoicey hand, to complain of an extension of legs which had defeated all T. Mixer's cal-

culations regarding the annual family demand for pepper and salt cassimere; and, moreover, if the mind might yield fond credence to T. Mixer as a representative of Briggs's mamma's opinions, given that lady great solicitude from being an indication of the "tuberculous diathesis." "If I've got to have that," said Briggs, "I'd rather stay short—what is it?" I confessed my ignorance, and advised him to ask Barker, in which I did him an unintentional unkindness, that worthy inviting him to examine the dictionary, which might have suggested itself in the first instance, and assisting him to fix it in his mind by writing it on a slate three hundred times after school-hours.

In spite of all (I am not sure but this may be a mixture of metaphors), Briggs's legs turned a deaf ear to parental remonstrance, his upper frame at the same time filling out to a degree which, taken in connection with the stern simplicity of Barker's table, was a corroboration of the nutritive properties of oxygen which must have satisfied the most sceptical physiologist. By the season that we were both fifteen, he lacked but an inch of the five feet six on which I prided myself; and six months after, when I began to talk of going to college, he was quite up to me, and, but for a certain unmistakable air of never having any pocket-money, one of the wholesomest-looking boys in school.

It was about this latter period, that an astonishing innovation was introduced at Barker's. The two Misses Moodle came to establish a young ladies' seminary in the village of Mungerville, on whose outskirts our own school was situated, bringing along with them, as the

county paper stated, "that charming atmosphere of refinement and intellectuality in which they ever moved"; and, what was of more consequence, a capital of twenty girls to start with. Professional politeness inspired Mr. Barker to make a call on the fair strangers, which the personal fascinations of the younger Miss Moodle induced him to repeat. The atmosphere of refinement and intellectuality gradually acted on him in the nature of an intoxicating gas, until at length, after twenty-five years of successfully intrenched widowhood, he laid his heart in the mits of the younger Miss Moodle, and they two became one Barker.

As a consequence of this union, social relations began to be established between the two schools. Mrs. Barker, of an occasional evening, wished to run down and visit her sister. If Mr. Barker was engaged in quarrying a page of Cicero out of some stony boy in whom nature had never made any Latin deposit, or had just put a fresh batch of offenders into the penal oven of untimely bed, and felt compelled to run up now and then to keep up the fire under them, by a harrowing description of the way their parents would feel if they knew of their behavior, — an instrument dear to Mr. Barker as a favorite poker to a boss-baker in love with his profession, — then, after a elueking noise, indicative of how much he would like to chuek her under the chin, but for the presenee of company, Mr. Barker would coo to Mrs. Barker, "Lovey, your pick, sweet!" waving his hand comprehensively over the whole school-room; or, "Dear, suppose we say Briggs, or Chunks, or Thirlwall," as the ease might be. The only difficulty about Briggs was

clothes. That used to be obviated by a selection from the trunks of intimate friends; and Briggs was such a nice boy, that it was a real gratification to see him with your best jacket on. Many's the time the old fellow has said to Chunks or me, "What a blessing that I grew! If I had u't, how could I ever wear your trousers?" In process of time these occasional visits, as escort to Mrs. Barker, expanded into an attendance of all the older boys (when not in bed for moral baking purposes) upon a series of bi-monthly soirées, given by the remaining Miss Moodle, with a superficial view to her pupils' attainment of ease in society; and a material substratum of sandwiches, which Miss Moodle preferred to see, through the atmosphere of refinement and intellectuality, as "a simple repast." To this was occasionally added a refreshment, which I have seen elsewhere only at Sunday-school picnics, — a mild tap of slightly sweetened water, which tasted as if lemons had formerly been kept in the pail it was made in; — only for Sunday schools they make it strong at the outset, and add water during the hymns, with a vague, but praiseworthy expectation that, in view of the sacredness of the occasion, there will be some miraculous interposition, as in the case of the widow's cruse, to keep the beverage up to proof; while Miss Moodle's liquor preserved throughout the evening a weakness of which generous natures scorned to take advantage beyond the first tumbler.

At this portion of my career I was dawned upon by Miss Tucker. From mature years, I look back with a shudder upon the number of parchments sandwiches which I ate, the reservoirs of lemony water which I

drank, in order to be in that lovely creature's society. I experienced agonies in thinking how much longer it might be before I got a coat with tails, when I calculated how soon she would be putting up her back hair. Her eyes were as blue as I was when I thought she liked Briggs; and she had a complexion compared with which strawberries and cream were nowhere. When she was sent to the piano, to show people what the Moodle system could do in the way of a musical education, I fell into a cataleptic state, and floated off upon a flood of harmony. Miss Moodle and her mits, self and lemon kids, even the sleepless eye of Barker, watching for an indiscretion, upon the strength of which he might defensibly send somebody to bed the next Saturday afternoon, all vanished from before me, swallowed up in a mild glory, which contained but two objects, — an angel with low neck and short sleeves, and an insensate hippopotamus of a piano, which did not wriggle all over with ecstasy when her white fingers tickled him. At such moments, I would gladly have gone down on all fours, and had a key-board mortised into my side at any expense of personal torture, if Miss Tucker could only have played a piece on me, and herself been conscious of the chords she was awakening inside my jacket. I loved her to that degree that my hair never seemed brushed enough when I beheld her; and I quite spoiled the shape of my best boots through an elevation of the instep, caused by putting a rolled-up pair of stockings inside each heel, to approximate the manly stature at our bi-monthly meetings. Even her friend, Miss Criekey, — a mealy-faced little girl, with saffron hair, who had been pushed by

Miss Moodle so far into the higher branches, that she had a look of being perpetually frightened to death with the expectation of hearing them crack and let her down from a great height, — seemed beautiful to me from the mere fact of daily breathing the same air with such an angel, sharing her licorice-stick, and borrowing her sweet little thimble.

I had other reasons for prejudice in Miss Crickey's favor. She was the only person to whom I could talk freely regarding the depth of my passion for Miss Tucker. Not even to the object of that tremendous feeling could I utter a syllable which seemed in any way adequate. With an overpowering consciousness how ridiculous it was, and not only so, but how far from original, I could give her papers of lemon Jackson-balls, hinting simultaneously that, though plump as her cheeks, they were not half so sweet; and through a figure, whose correct name I have since learned to be periphrasis, I could suggest how much my soul yearned to expire on her ruby lips, by asking if she had ever played door-keeper; regretting that the atmosphere of refinement and intellectuality did not admit of that healthful recreation at Moodle's, and begging her to guess whom I would call out if I were door-keeper myself. When she opened her blue eyes innocently, and said, "Miss Crickey?" the intimation was rejected with a melancholy dissatisfaction, which would have been disdain but for the character of my feelings to its source. And when, on my pressing her for the name of the favored mortal whom she would call out if she were door-keeper, she slyly dropped her eyes and asked if Briggs sounded anything like

it, I savagely refused to consider the proposition at all, and for the rest of the evening ate sandwiches to that degree I wonder my life was not despaired of, and fled for relief to the lemony bowl. The result of this mad vortex having been colic and calomel, after my return to Barker's on that evening, I forswore such dangerous excesses at the next bi-monthly; but putting a larger pair of stockings in each boot-heel, to impress Miss Tucker with a sense of what she had lost, I devoted myself during the earlier part of the evening to a growing young woman, of the name of Wagstaff, considerably older than myself and running straight up and down from whatever side one might contemplate her. Her conversation was not entertaining, unless from the Chinese point of view, which, I understand, distinctly favors monosyllables, and she giggled at me so persistently that I feared Miss Tucker would think I must be making myself ridiculous; but, on her being sent to the piano, I stood and turned over her music with a consciousness that if I ever looked impressive it was then. All this I did in the effort to seem gay, although my heart was breaking. I had no comfort on earth save the thought that I had been brutal to Briggs, and that he sat in an obscure corner of the room among some little girls in Long Division, hiding, behind an assistant teacher's skirts, the whitey-brown toe which my blacking-brush had refused to refresh, while I bore my grief upon a pair of new boots plentifully provided with squeak-leather. When Miss Tucker slipped a little piece of paper into my hand, as I made a hollow show of passing her the sandwiches, I came very near dropping the

plate; and when I had a chance to open it unobserved, and read the words, "Are you mad with me?" I could not occupy my bold and dreary pinnacle a moment longer, but sought an early opportunity of squeezing her hand two seats behind the voluminous asylum of Briggs's toes, and whispering, slightly confused by intensity of feeling, that if I had done anything I was sorry for, I was willing to be forgiven. From that moment I was Miss Tucker's slave. O woman, woman! The string on which you play us is as long as life; it ties your baby-bib; it laces your queenly bodice; and on its slenderest tag we dangle everywhere!

The next term at both Moodle's and Barker's ran from May to October. The blessed discovery of long summer vacations had not yet dawned upon the educational mind. Mr. Barker or Miss Moodle would have regarded such a thing very much as a kitchen-gardener would have received a proposition to give holiday through the warm weather to his early cauliflowers. What was the use of such nice long days, except to get the whole of the rule for cube root at one lesson? As for passing a Saturday afternoon in bed, what month could compete with July in its opportunities of salutary irritation? So all the boys and girls of my day, melted through the dog-days into the moulds of classic eloquence, discovered the value of x while their own flesh took its place as an unknown quantity; solved the square of the hypotenuse and the rotundity of their own solids with the same process, and exuded on the other side of the French irregular verbs as an insensible perspiration. When I think what we endured, I am all the more set in my conviction of the

hypocrisy of autobiographies; for I know that no man could ever have struggled through to worldly eminence in this day, who did not freely play hookey in that; while distinguished piety would be too much strain on any mature modern constitution which in boyhood had not relieved itself by going out into the middle of a ten-acre lot for, at least, a quarterly swear.

When I returned for the summer session, I had two comforts, which were not granted to every boy at Barker's, — a kind and neighboring ma and a coat with tails. The latter in several newspapers, and a trunk perceptibly marked with my name and address in full upon three several cards, to provide against the contingency of its miscarriage, which I could not think of on the steamboat without being indescribably moved, came with me to my little coop at Barker's. The former, having been recommended by her physician to try sea-air during the summer, took a pretty little cottage, with ample grounds and a stable, to which she brought down her own horses, at a quiet though favorite watering-place, preserving, after a deservedly admired usage, its old romantic Indian name of Squash-ke-bosh. Squash-ke-bosh was situated at a distance of but fifty miles, by a good post-road, from the village of Mungerville. It was considered by Mr. Barker very injurious to his pupils' future prospects to allow them to see their parents in term-time. He thought it made them dissatisfied when they got back to school. Nor was he far out of the way, when we consider that even Buffum, the least impressible boy in school, was moved to tears whenever he got a letter from his mother, and made inadequate to any decent amount

of Latin grammar for the rest of the afternoon solely by the reflection of what a hand she was for chicken pot-pies. Nevertheless, the feeling of sympathy toward an invalid for whom sea-air was recommended, and the thought that Mrs. Barker might also like to become an invalid of the same kind at a cheap rate some time during the summer, made it impossible for Mr. Barker to refuse a lady, with such a nice house and grounds, the request that her darling might pass an occasional Sunday with her and have a week for the same purpose about the Fourth of July.

A boy with such a kind ma and a coat with tails was naturally expected to be very good during the entire term. It is astonishing how insufficient basis these mercies proved for the proper style of behavior on my part, and when I now look back on what I went and did in spite of them, I appreciate the struggles of the sincere autobiographer as I never did before. I went and took a ride without asking Barker. Perhaps it was because I did this that he said, "There 's no use in granting a boy pleasures,—if you give him an inch he takes an ell"; perhaps it was because I had heard him say it before, and reflected that the witness of that previous tail-coat would rise to bar my having any further swing of wild hilarity, that I did n't ask him if I might.

It was a bright Saturday in June,—neither too cold nor too warm,—and three p. m. At a bi-monthly during the preceding week I had seen Miss Tucker, and was still her slave. She had put her back hair up, and looked beautifully presented in that way; but I thought what a contrast there would have been to my existing heavenly

serenity of mind, had I a ma like some boys' mas and a coat without tails. I also saw Miss Criekey, who, having grown mealier during vacation and adhered to the fashion of eues tied on her baek with blue ribbons, looked more than ever like a mote floating in the radiance of that baek hair. I had long ago made up with Briggs, for whom I was now ready to do anything, from the partieular of blaeking upward, which could be any comfort to a person not the object of preferenee by Miss Tueker. The singular aeident of his having known what to do with your partieiple in *dus*, when you wanted to be a peg more elegant than was eompatible with your gerund in *dum*, had, on this partieular Saturday, deprived Mr. Barker of any pretext for putting an extra brown upon his slaek-baked mind in the oven of the dormitory; and an amount of self-control, arguing rapid growth toward manhood's worldly astuteness, had prevented him from whistling with eecstasy over his unusual luek before he left the sehool-room, and being ealled baek to write the noun descriptive of his aet five hundred times upon a slate. So Briggs and I, at three P. M., as aforesaid, stood untrammelled by aught save guilty fear in the little stably-smelling pen, shared by the whips, ledgers, and buffalo-robos of Mr. Greeseels, the livery-man.

"I want a conveyance," I began boldly.

"In the nature o' wot?" returned Mr. Greeseels, eying us suspiciously from under a fell left eyebrow, which needed the singeing lamp more than any haek's coat in his stud.

"I think Mr. Barker prefers a four-seated roekaway,"

interposed Briggs, with a prompt acuteness, which showed that his tussle with the gerund in *dum* had done wonders for his intellectual discipline.

At the same time I pulled out a gold watch, which my mother had given me during vacation, stated the time, and asked that the vehicle might be got ready immediately; also, drawing out a wallet which contained my entire savings for the term, and demanding how much it would be for the whole afternoon, with a first-rate horse, let him take notice, turned around so as to show Mr. Greeseels that he was not dealing with one of your jacket sort of characters by any means. So much opulence, assurance, and tails were too much for Mr. Greeseels, who succumbed without another word. In five minutes the rockaway and a big, long-stepping gray stood at the mounting-block. I paid the price in advance, motioned Briggs to the back seat, grasped the reins, jumped up in front, and drove away. To favor the impression left upon the cautious hippodromic mind, yet with fear and trembling lest Barker should meet us, we kept the road toward the school till a turn shut the stables out of sight, then cut down a side street to the retired candy store, at which, during Miss Moodle's last bi-monthly, we had appointed a clandestine meeting with Miss Tucker and Miss Crickey. We found those young ladies chilling their consciences with ice-cream in a back-room, and quite unable, through preoccupation in watching for a momentarily possible Miss Moodle, to say whether it was lemon or vanilla. They were prettily attired in Marseilles basquines and dresses of sprigged muslin; and the novel position of committing an impropriety had

imparted an interesting flush to the cheek of Miss Crickey, which I could not but observe with satisfaction, as I definitely intended her and Briggs for each other, — a purpose additionally furthered by putting the two together on the back seat. The direction in which I should drive was perplexed by several harassing conditions. Miss Tucker was not quite sure whether the honest peasant, who accommodated Miss Moodle in the matter of milk, lived upon the Pratt's Corners Road or the Tinkerville turnpike, and he was familiar with her beautiful countenance, having sold her sour buttermilk for its sunburns, had a long memory and a communicative tongue. A day-boarder, who objected to Miss Crickey from the fact of her always answering first for the men who built stone-walls in a given number of days, or the boys who had apples to distribute, in mental arithmetic, would probably be swinging on the parental gate all the afternoon, three miles out of town in the direction of North Jenkins; and nothing would give her greater pleasure than the solution of the question, If two girls went out riding, unbeknownst, on Saturday, P. M., how many would get put on bread and water the next Monday morning? Briggs's step-father had an aunt with piles of money, on still another road, but as he knew the boss (such was his unfilial expression) would never go to see her unless she died, and there was no danger of her doing that, for all the family had a way of hanging on like thunder, he did n't care a row of pins whether we took that road or not. As that road happened to be the one leading to Squash-ke-bosh, and I felt a natural interest in seeing how it looked since my mother was at the other end of

it, I decided that we should take it. It was a very pleasant one, with snug farms and patches of beech and oak forest upon either hand, enlivened here and there by more ambitious grounds, trim lawns with stately Palladian residences shining through bowers of ash, larch, althea, and smoke-tree in the background, and the *fermes ornées* of retired merchants, who had a passion for skipping away their hard dollars on the bottomless pond of fancy cattle-breeding. A pretty little brook kept us company all the way,—now running alongside the straight old turnpike, now dodging under it to come gleefully singing out of the umber bridge-shadows on the other side, like a coquettish child gambolling about the knees and ducking between the legs of some staid ancient gentleman. Everything in the gift of bountiful nature was received with such thankful joy by the four escaped criminals who freighted the rockaway, that only the eye of an expert in natural depravity, like Barker or Moodle, could have pierced the thick veil of deception and gloated on the depths of iniquity which lay hidden in the compass of the one-horse vehicle. As for myself, I can say that I was full of a fearful happiness. I drove in a dream of bliss. I was already married to Miss Tueker; the big, raw-boned gray was my own team of thoroughbreds; we were making an original honeymoon tour by easy stages, stopping at rural inns overnight, having our coffee as strong as we liked, and sugaring it ourselves, in the morning; unrestricted as to paneakes, gravy, bedtime, anything; paying large bills with easy nonchalance out of an inexhaustible check-book carried under the back-seat; having our groom and bridesmaid behind us already engaged and

driven to tantalizations of rapture by the consummated hymeneal example in front; while, adding an intoxicating zest to all this sweetness, like the spirituous soupçon which tingles through the sirupy flavors of an arrack punch, came that masculine smack of the illicit, — that thought of all this being in spite of the Barker and the Moodle. Many a time since then have I trundled behind my own two-forty trotter; but there was nobody to stop me, and I found it, O, how tame!

We came to a place where, under drooping alders, the little brook paused in a quiet pool, like a frolicsome pilgrim, turning aside and sitting out of the noontide brightness to ponder demurely on reflections of the leaves and sky. Steeped in coolness to their dewlaps, — the whole problem of worldly anxiety reduced to flies, a few square feet of tawny back, and a whisking tail, — a group of cattle lifted their great brown eyes vacantly toward us, as we rolled over the twentieth bridge upon our journey. I had halted the gray for Miss Tucker to admire a lovely little calf, with a white star on his forehead, and the most incapable legs ever vouchsafed an immature vertebrate. On her expressing a wish that she had him, I was submitting to my mind the insane proposition whether it would not be possible to tie his legs with a pocket-handkerchief, carry him back with us between the seats, and get Briggs to help me build a cage for him, that he might be hung up in Miss Tucker's room, when the sound of rolling wheels behind us waked me from my trance, and, looking back, I beheld Barker and Mrs. Barker, Boens the mathematical teacher, and Miss Moodle, coming on in a rockaway like unto our own.

A dreadful moment ! The eye of Barker had marked me ; the voice of Barker was already calling on me to stop. I simply gasped his name, when Miss Tucker uttered a piteous little cry like a wounded fawn. I added that of Moodle ; she hid her face in my bosom, and I was strong. The entire force of my character came to a point at the end of my whip. The gray struck out manfully ; and, looking through the back glass, Briggs reported that the old 'un was a going it likewise. Miss Crickey, having a mathematical mind, became our strong pillar of consolation, — first suggesting to us the thought, If four grown people behind Barker's fat mare could go a certain distance in a given time, how far could as many light weights go, with our gray, in the same time ? I do not recollect that I analyzed the problem according to the method of Colburn ; but what I do know is, that it gave me the only comfort

• I ever got out of mental arithmetic. The voice of Barker grew fainter and fainter, and at last died away like some spectral echo of the dead schoolmasters who flogged mankind in the days of the Seleucidæ ; then sank to nothing, as their remorseful cries have gone down into Hades and oblivion. Looking back from the top of every hill, we could still see Barker pressing on. But a stern-chase is a long chase ; weight and age were both against him ; and, at every view, fat Kitty showed increasing bellows to mend. At length, going up a long rise, Briggs reported from the rear that the enemy had abandoned pursuit ; and, for the first time venturing to look out, I beheld him, at the distance of half a mile, turn Kitty's head and start for home. It

was before the day of universal telegraphs, or he would have been abundantly adequate to set the rural police on us throughout the county; there was no railway communication in the direction we were travelling, or he would not have hesitated a moment to hire a special engine for our capture, and charge it on my ma's quarterly bill. What he might do was to return, and, selecting the fleetest courser in Mungerville, resume the scent in the saddle or a sulky. There was no time to lose. Without thinking whither we went, I pressed the big gray, until a solemn-faced stone at the wayside warned us that we had strayed a distance of sixteen miles from the refining and intellectual atmosphere of Moodle's. Miss Tucker was sobbing bitterly. Briggs, plunged in gloom and his own pockets to the elbow, was uttering grim reflections upon the liveliness of a future eternity of Saturdays in bed. I was suffering agonies of remorse at the misery in which I had involved the lovely and uncomplaining but heart-broken creature at my side. Miss Crickey alone was calm. Retiring into the fastnesses of a mind strengthened by the compound fractions, and, unlike Miss Tucker, having no back hair to come down in the distraction of the exigency, she was something to admire, and I could not but hope that Briggs would do it. She never uttered a syllable until that youth ungenerously threw the whole responsibility upon me by saying, —

“Well, here's a pickle! Now what do *you* mean to do?”

Before I could reply, Miss Crickey returned from her fastnesses to the actual situation with the words, —

“I think Mr. Thirlwall once remarked that he had a ma living at Squash-ke-bosh. This is the road to Squash-ke-bosh. Sixteen from fifty leaves thirty-four miles. Let us go and throw ourselves upon the compassion of Mr. Thirlwall’s ma.”

Miss Tucker looked up radiantly, bid farewell to every fear, and wiped her weeping eyes.

“That was the way George Washington did,” said Miss Tucker, in a moist voice, “the time he had been and done it with his little hatchet.”

“He had immediate recourse to his pa,” said Miss Crickey, supplying the exact details with a commendable desire for historic accuracy.

“And a ma’s a darned sight better than a pa,” quoted Briggs from the stores of his own experience.

I myself could think of nothing better to do than Miss Crickey proposed; for I would as soon, under the circumstances, have changed places with Regulus, and gone back to Carthage for a ride down hill in a nail-keg, as to have returned to Barker’s and Moodle’s. Fortunately, just after sunset, there came up a heavy thunder-shower, which gave us an excuse for turning a mile down a cross-road, and taking shelter for the night in a farm-house, where we were hospitably taken care of in the character of a family of cousins, on their way to visit an aunt; had a splendid time eating strawberries and cream, and realized the long ideal ecstasy of “door-keeper.” Memory still chronicles, with a thrill, that under that humble roof I kissed Miss Tucker for the first time. Avaunt, thou spectral recollection, that Briggs similarly improved the opportunity!

The big gray, having been equally refreshed, after his fashion, took us cleverly into Squash-ke-bosh by one o'clock the next afternoon. As my ma was a new-comer to that pleasant seaport, I expected considerable trouble in finding her cottage; but was saved that by the occurrence of another awkwardness, — meeting her just as she came out of church, upon the principal street, and startling her, by my apparition, to that degree she dropped her handsome prayer-book and forgot whether the text had been in Revelation or Job. Explanation being impossible, where people discuss a subject from such different grounds as a rockaway and the sidewalk, I took her up on the front seat with Miss Tucker, and gave her a sketch of our recent adventures, in that spirit of frankness which characterized the before-cited memorable interview between Mr. Bushrod Washington and his boy G. The grandfather of his country could not be more lenient than was that dear mother. Her chiding was of the gentlest; tears and laughter contended for the possession of her eyes; when she got us into the house she took us all literally to her heart and kissed us, beginning with me, and promised us an asylum until mediation could let us down easily into the stern but placated bosoms of Barker and Moodle. The ensuing evening she spent in writing letters to those authorities, and to the mammas of my three fellow-convicts.

Monday and Tuesday must necessarily pass before she could receive any reply to the Barker and Moodle letters, which went out by the early stage on Monday morning. The big gray was sent back in charge of a trusty messenger, who also bore behind him in the rockaway two

hampers of choice hot-house fruit as a propitiatory offering to the offended Moloch of education. While we were waiting, the hours passed in a perfect trance of delight. We played every game of which human ingenuity is capable. We bathed in the surf and we boated on the bay. We drove out in the carriage with my mother to visit a Hauging Rock and a Lover's Leap. When Miss Crickey said that the former was in only apparent danger of falling because a line drawn through its centre of gravity would not strike outside the base, I was pained to see Briggs manifest less admiration at the statement than its scientific accuracy deserved, and regretted that he could not experience those emotions which thrilled my bosom when, standing on the edge of the latter, I imagined Moodle and Barker coming up behind to tear Miss Tucker from my arms, put my arms tenderly around her waist, and calculated the distance between us and the fathomless deep. My mother's sympathy for Briggs was of a nature which constantly affected him to tears. She had heard of his family circumstances from me, and took extra pains to show him those delicate little attentions which are so missed by the homeless boy. If she drew him caressingly to her side, or gave him a particularly large slice of marmalade at lunch, he was certain to be missing almost immediately after, and to turn up in some unexpected corner violently blowing his nose.

On Wednesday afternoon we received our replies from Mr. Barker and Miss Moodle, couched very much in such terms as might be expected from a pair of Turkish pashas sparing the lives of a batch of political offenders

at the intercession of some powerful foreign government. Briggs alone was made an exception to the amnesty. With a terseness which left so much for the imagination as to prove that Mr. Barker would have achieved great eminence in dramatic literature had he chosen that career, the letter said that Master Briggs's case was now under consideration of his pa, who would doubtless act wisely under the circumstances, and needed no suggestions from the writer.

About an hour after the letters came, while we sat in the parlor in deep gloom, discussing the honorableness of going back to Mungerville without Briggs, the maid brought in a card to my mother's sitting-room from a gentleman in the front parlor.

"Lard and bacon! Pork packed and shipped!" exclaimed my mother. "He really can't think I deal in any such articles. Do you know any such name as that, Ben?"

I glanced at the card, and my involuntary exclamation of "By jingo!" brought Briggs to my side. "T. Mixer! O Lord!" said the poor boy; and with something very like a howl of anguish, he jumped out of the back window to the veranda and fled into the shrubbery.

"Go you after him, Ben," spoke my mother. "I'm afraid he'll run away to sea. Tell him I'm going in to see Mr. Mixer, and comfort him." My mother's manner prevented any misconstruction of the equivocal. It was plain enough that she was not going in to be any comfort to Mixer, and I gladly rushed out to do that office for Briggs. I found him in the hay-loft, leaning

against a stringer, and apparently trying to kick all the pegs out of his left heel, which in moments of desperation was his favorite method of making up his mind.

“ You see that beam ? ” asked Briggs, huskily.

“ Yes ! what of that ? ” said I.

“ Has your ma got a spare clothes-line, — a strong one, — one she won’t want to use till to-morrow ? ”

“ I suppose so ; but what do you want of that now ? ”

“ Just get it for me, will you, please, then leave me alone for a few minutes. If anything happens before you come back, cut a lock of hair off the back of my head ; that’s where my mother — used — to be — fondest of brushing — it ; it don’t stiek out so stiff as it does in front. Tell her I didn’t blame her ; enclose it in a little note, and say — I — I — I loved her to the last.” Here his voice choked with emotion ; he buried his face in a bale of hay and groaned aloud.

I threw myself upon Briggs’s neck, combed the hayseed out of his hair, and besought him to weigh the matter well before he hanged himself. I implored him to remember what nice times we might have gathering chestnuts in the fall ; to think of his mother (he shut his eyes doggedly) — of me (he did not stir) — of Miss Crickey (he made a perceptible sign of disdain) — of — of — I hesitated but a moment and added, “ Miss Tucker.” A pang shot through me, though I did not wish him to hang himself, when I beheld a remarkable change come over him at the mention of that lovely name. He shut his teeth, clenched his fists, shook himself like a Newfoundland, and stood up to his full stature of five feet

seven. It was undeniable that Briggs was a very stout, manly-looking boy.

"Well," said he, grimly, after a moment's reflection, "there's one thing I can do. I can go off to China, and come back, when I'm a man, with a cargo of silks and teas."

"Be a man now, Briggs," said I, encouragingly; "let's go out and walk in the air; you'll feel better for it. Bless me! Don't you suppose we'll stand by you, old fellow?"

We were wandering, arm in arm, toward a rustic summer-house in the back-grounds, when we perceived my mother coming down the gravel walk from the veranda, accompanied by a stranger, whom it was not difficult to divine as Mixer. The problem of his objection to Briggs's growth was solved immediately, for nature had been a stern creditor with him in the matter of legs, and after letting them run for the first twelve years of his life, inexorably refused him any further extension, so that he was scarcely, if any, taller than Briggs was when I first knew him. He had a small, lumpy head, with strands of a peculiar greenish-brown shade of hair plastered on it at wide intervals, like ribbons of half-dry sea-weed; a diffused slippery nose, that looked as if it had been boned and larded as some fearful delicacy, and a flat, doughy face shoved under it to serve for bottom crust. His thin, vulgarly cut lips wore an expression of pert criticism, which might have sprung from the habit of testing the strength of pork-brine, and his reddish-brown eyes had all the mean truculence of a snapping eel's.

Briggs turned deadly pale when he saw him, but kept on his way toward him.

"Mr. Mixer wished to walk out and look for you," said my mother, in a voice where kindness to Briggs struggled with poorly concealed disgust for the object at her side.

"Yes," spoke Mixer, with a smack of malignant satisfaction; "yes-s-s; happening through this flourishing seaport on business, and accidentally having heard from Mr. Barker, with whom I chanced to spend last evening, that a young friend of mine was passing the summer here very pleasantly, I naturally felt a desire to call and see how he was getting on; also, to see if there was anything I could do for him. And I think, — very decidedly, — I think there is. Your son, ma'am, I suppose" (turning his hang-dog eyes from Briggs to me), — "and a nice boy he is, — yes-s-s, really, a very nice boy. Master Briggs, if this lady and your agreeable young friend will excuse us, suppose you oblige me with a few moments' conversation in the shrubbery?"

Briggs's lip quivered for a moment, and then he said, "Well." "We sha' n't go far," he added to me, with a most expressive glance, that meant that my mother and I should not. We understood him, and, as he strolled off toward the stables again with Mixer by his side, kept out of sight, but conveniently near to afford him the sense of our moral support. At first we could hear nothing but the shrill hiss of Mixer's satirical affirmatives, answering every quiet, low-voiced explanation which Briggs made. Presently, however, Briggs's key rose, and he was quite audible when he told Mixer that he had bul-

lied his mother almost into her grave, and was trying to shove her son in after her. "But you sha' n't!" added Briggs, "you sha' n't! and *she* should n't stay with you another day if I were only a man and had any place to take her to."

"So ho!" replied T. Mixer, unconsciously speaking louder, but still in a tone of satanic coolness. "Mr. Barker has failed with you too, has he? You have a peculiarly depraved and stiff-necked nature, young man, but we'll make one more effort to save you. You can take that jacket off, and be quick about it, too."

They had come to a pause under a big linden, and for a moment Briggs stood irresolutely, eying his step-father.

"Come, — do you hear me? — off with that jacket!" repeated Mixer, and at the same time passing his hand inside a loose travelling-sack which he wore, produced a stout, red raw-hide about three feet long.

"Damn the brute!" said I, involuntarily, and my mother did not check me, for the blood was mounting into her gentle face till it crimsoned her very temples; and the next instant, dashing her garden-flat to the green-sward, she burst from behind the shrubbery, and made her way toward Mixer at a pace which looked either very unlike an invalid for whom sea-air had been recommended, or like one to whom the prescription had been remarkably salutary. Before she reached him, the cow-hide had descended once upon the head of Briggs, and made two angry red wales across his upheld hands.

"Give me that whip, sir," said my mother, between her clenched teeth.

Mixer cast at her one look of savage amazement, then lifted the raw-hide again.

"*Give me that whip,*" repeated my mother, in a still lower tone; her brows coming down to a point over eyes which pierced Mixer through. The cur dropped his hand, and unresistingly suffered my mother to take the rod out of it. She flung it out into the tall grass as far as she could throw: then with flashing eyes addressed Briggs. —

"I don't want you to hurt this — *man* — you know; but you can turn him out of my premises just as soon as you like. You're a good stout boy, and you might make mincemeat of him, if you put out your strength; so don't knock him down, or pound him, or anything of that sort. I leave him to you; be careful of him."

"Now's the time to oblige him!" I cried. "Off with your coat, Briggs!"

So saying, I was about to come in for my share of the fun, but Briggs stopped me.

"No, no, Ben! Two to one's not fair play; besides, he's up to having you put in the lock-up for assault and battery, and calling your own mother to swear on you; I'm able for him alone, I guess."

With these words Briggs let fly a neat left-hander, and threw his shoulder after it, bringing up against his substitute for a parent in the region just above the cravat-tie. Mr. Mixer went in pursuit of his balance spirally for a few yards, and, failing to overtake it, sat suddenly down. The distance between his sedentary and upright posture was not so great as in the case of a person more liberally blessed with legs; but even this

little he was unable to make up before Briggs was once more upon him. Catching his ancient tyrant by the collar with his right hand, and taking as firm a hold of his nose as that broad and slippery member admitted of, with his left, he elevated him to his feet, and asked him which side he should let go of, back or front; "for out you go one way or t' other, you know," added Briggs, considerably, "and you can take your choice; so say now, — push or pull?"

T. Mixer, thoroughly cowed, began whining that he preferred to have his nose let go of, but added in a nasal voice, which marred the moral dignity of the sentiment, that he hoped that Briggs would "rebebbber his filial duty, if it was odly for his ba's sake."

"Don't you talk to me of my ma, you sneak!" roared Briggs, giving the nose one final tweak before he abandoned it; "don't you dare to mention her, you hypocrite!" he repeated, shaking Mixer as a terrier would shake a rat, "unless you want to sit on the ground again without anything to put your feet on!" Then, propelling him before him by the nape of the neck as fast as his legs would carry him, Briggs trundled the dethroned despot to the front gate, and, while I held it open for him, dismissed Mr. Mixer into the outer world with a parting kick, which sent him half-way across the road. For a moment he turned round and showed symptoms of relieving himself in a torrent of abuse; but, seeing his castigator ready to perfect his lesson, contented himself with shaking his fist, and departed down the road toward Squash-ke-bosh. Briggs returned silently from the gate, and, sitting down on a rustic scat

in the grounds, gave way to the reaction of his feelings. He struggled bravely to repress his excitement; but as he buried his face in his hands, the words came out sobbingly, —

“And now — I ’m all — a-a-alone in the world.”

My mother came out of the shrubbery behind him, stole one arm tenderly around his neck, and said, —

“No, you aren’t, my child; if this has lost you all the home you had, you can have your share of Ben’s.”

So the long and the short of it was, that Briggs spent all his vacations after that under my mother’s roof; and as for his school-days, she herself personally saw to the arrangement by which he was received back at Barker’s. T. Mixer, upon reflection, concluded that he would do himself no credit by appearing further on the scene.

My history here makes a Hanlon Brothers’ leap across the chasm of seven years. Briggs had thrown away all his early experience of self-denial by refusing to go out as a missionary, and accepting a confidential position in the Wall Street house of which I was junior partner. We occupied a suite of rooms together in Clinton Place, and Miss Tucker, now a belle in society, was at home with her parents, a few blocks above us on the avenue. Miss Crickey had married a widower, and having a large capital of ready-made children to start the mental arithmetic business with, had gone to Germany to consult the newest lights of education. My mother’s attachment to the old homestead where my father had first brought her, kept her from selling the place, and she stayed there during the greater part of the year, I spending all the time with her that I could spare from

my business in summer, and promising myself the pleasure of having her under my own roof during the winter, as soon as I could get married and keep house. How soon that might be was very uncertain. I was of a singularly constant nature, and still Miss Tucker's slave. My mother's letter to her ma, written on her behalf when she eloped with me from Moodle's, had led to an intimate acquaintance between the families, and now, living in New York, I visited her one and often two evenings in the week. Briggs's friendship was no less sedulous, and I spared myself the possibility of pain by refraining from the inquiry how much deeper feeling he entertained toward the object of my adoration. I knew that this state of uncertainty could not last always. I felt a daily increasing reticence toward my old school-mate, and saw that if something definite were not done soon, an incurable jealousy and coolness would be established between us. For the sake of our intimacy, to say nothing of my own peace of mind, I must bring matters to a decision by speaking definitely to Miss Tucker. The result might be as painful as an heroic surgical operation to either Briggs or myself; but it would stop the gangrene of our friendship.

I came to this conclusion one evening when Briggs had gone up to call on Miss Tucker, and I sat by a small sea-coal fire (for, though spring, the weather was still chilly) smoking my cigar at eleven o'clock, and wondering how in the world any man could have the thoughtlessness to keep a private family up till that hour. It must have been still later when he left the Tuckers, for he did not get back to our lodgings until

twelve. When he did come, he kicked off his boots as soon as he entered our parlor, and went to his bedroom without saying a word beyond good night.

The next afternoon, as Briggs stood by a desk at the window, deep in some abstruse stock calculation, and I sat before the office-grate reading business letters just brought in by the mail-boy, we heard the whole street thrown into an uproar outside us, by the sonorous cry of "Extra!" Partners, clerks, and loungers ran to the door at once, to discover that History had opened her iron account-book with the nation, and made her first entry in the fall of Sumter. That revelation closed our own trivial business for the day. The next day's wild excitement, slowly but surely settling into the strength of inexorable loyal purpose, who needs that I recall? Briggs was absent from his desk, but I never noticed the fact till it was time for me to go up town. Just then he entered the office. If his conduct was strange to me on the night of his last return from the Tuckers, it was stranger now. He vouchsafed me nothing but a cold nod, then entered into animated conversation with a knot of business-men who were discussing the great question of the day in our back office. Having fifteen minutes to spare, I presently joined them. The talk ran upon volunteering. Several, who already belonged to municipal organizations, expressed their intention of sharing the fight, and one of them suddenly turned to me with the question, —

"Are *you* going?"

I thought of the hostage I might be leaving to Fortune, in the person of Miss Tucker, and hesitatingly

replied that there seemed to be plenty going for the present without me, and I did n't know.

Briggs said, as if speaking incidentally to a third person, that there were also plenty of cowards staying behind.

Our old jealousies culminated in an instant. "Do you mean to apply that term to me?" I asked fiercely, with my cheeks crimson.

"If the shoe fits, wear it," answered Briggs, nonchalantly. The kind of autobiography that I write compels me to own that I struck him. I was sorry for the act the moment after. I ought to have been patient with him and made allowance for some hidden source of irritation. I ought not to have given serious weight to a sneer which I was conscious of not deserving, and of which I might know that another mood would make him ashamed. But these thoughts only came with the reaction from my anger, and the blow was struck.

Briggs turned on me at once, but some of the others jumped between us to prevent a fight, telling him that he had given the first offence, and trying to persuade him to walk away soberly. I returned into the front office, and tried to absorb myself in the afternoon news, that I might get quiet enough to walk up town, but my heart was too full. I thought of Briggs's unhappy boyhood, of the many hard and happy times we had been through together, of the almost brotherly relations which had so long existed between us, of the rivalry which had been disturbing them, and of the bitterness of spirit which he must have endured in silence before he could become so changed toward me. The current of my re-

flections was suddenly broken by the entrance of Briggs, the other gentlemen following him.

“Ben,” said he, addressing me in a husky voice, “you might have known me well enough to be sure that I did n’t mean to call you a coward; and yet” — his voice trembled so he could scarcely speak, — “and yet, you struck me, — struck me in the face. You know the way we look upon those insults, — they’re things to be atoned for; and if you were not who you are, and we what we’ve been to each other, I’d call you out to-morrow. But this is a time which forbids men to throw away their blood on private quarrels; so I challenge you another way, — I challenge you to go with me into the fight for our country. There is a meeting at eight o’clock to-night at Ralston and Crosby’s warehouse, of young men who wish to organize a volunteer regiment for immediate service under Colonel Crosby. I shall be there to enroll myself. Will you accept?”

I looked into his face for a moment, and then answered, “I will.”

I kept my word, and left the warehouse at nine that evening a member of the Crosby regiment. From that place, I rode at once to the residence of Mr. Tucker. I stayed longer there than I had at the warehouse, and on coming away was member of still another organization, — an organization of two. A fortnight afterward, Briggs and I were on our way to Washington.

Again my autobiography makes a leap. The regiment had several times seen active service. Briggs and I had risen to the captaincies of our several companies. On the 11th day of December, 1862, we had crossed the

Rappahannock, and now, where this narrative resumes its thread, were fighting our way under a murderous fire from every cover, from street to street, through Fredericksburg.

As I was engaged in posting advanced skirmishers along the line on which brave Arthur Fuller had just fallen but forty rods further to the eastward, a body of one hundred Rebels rose with yells from behind a low board-fence across the way, and poured a volley into our little squad. We looked about in vain for support. It was a necessity bitter as death; but we were compelled to fall back to the cover of an old stable on the next street. Slowly and in good order, firing steadily as we retired, we got within a pistol-shot of shelter, and, looking back, saw Briggs's company coming at the double-quick up a lane on the right to reinforce us, when I felt a sudden shiver of pain, as if a sharp icicle had run into my thigh; my feet went from under me; my eyes grew misty; and then all was darkness.

When I next came to myself, it was late twilight. I was lying alone, in maddening thirst and agony, — the air about me stifling with smoke, and still singing with bullets. Two detachments of the opposing forces were contending for the space on which I lay; and, as the balls whistled over me, I momentarily expected the final quietus to my pain. In an interval between the volleys on our side, I saw a man leave the ranks, and come crawling on his hands and knees toward me. Little by little he approached the place where I lay, without attracting the aim of the opposite combatants. It was too dark to distinguish his uniform; but I supposed him

some reckless rebel, coming to rob me of my watch and side-arms; and, having heard of the practice, occasionally indulged in by our foes, of putting wounded men beyond the future trouble of claiming such little trinkets, feigned death, with eyes tight-shut and breath close-held. But he bent over me only an instant; then lifted me upon his back, with my face over his shoulder and my arms hanging down, and began returning with me, on his hands and knees, as he had come. When he was about half-way home to his comrades, the enemy evidently caught sight of him; for a shout ran along their front, and a dozen shots followed, unpleasantly close to my ears. My carrier lay down for a moment, slid me off his back, wound one arm around my waist, and, covering me with his own body, crept on his knees and the remaining hand until he had dragged me within his own lines. Just as he got in, the pain of my wounded leg reached such a pitch, through the irritation of movement, that I heard only the burst of cheers with which his friends received him, and the rattle of the volley which his return left them free to fire, then once more became dead to all the world.

When I again awoke, I found myself lying on a bed of army-blankets, with a pillow of the same material rolled up under my head; and two men stood near me, talking in a repressed voice, under the shadow of a high stone-wall.

"I'm afraid he can't possibly last through the night," said one of them; "he has lost so much blood that there's nothing left to rally. He may revive again for a moment, but hardly."

“Well, doetor,” answered the other, in a voice of deep sadness, “don’t let me keep you any longer; I’ll stay and watch with him till the stretcher comes.”

It was my old schoolmate who spoke. I tried to call on him; but, in my intense weakness, my tongue failed me.

He brought a lantern from the shadow of the wall, and, tucking the blankets tenderly about my feet, threw the light upon his lap, and took out of his pocket a little bundle tied up in his handkerchief. When he undid the knots, I recognized in their enclosure the precious little remembrances which I had carried next my breast and taken into every fight with me since the war began. One by one he held them in the light of the lantern, and soliloquized over them bitterly.

“*She* gave me a home; *she* stood up for me when I had n’t a defender in the world; *she* did a mother’s best for me when mine could n’t help me. That’s her dear face, with the eyes looking just as if she expected Ben; and there lies all that will ever get home to her. And *I* brought him here — *I*, *I*! O God! why could n’t they have shot me too? Why did n’t I fall dead on him while I was dragging him out of fire? How can *I* send him back to her, *so*?

“Here are the letters, — ‘Captain Ben Thirlwall’; he’d have been a general if he’d lived. How proud his mother’d have been. How proud *she*’d have been too. And here’s *her* picture. O, sweet, sweet! how I’ve loved those eyes — ever so long ago — ever since I was a little boy! — and I’d no right — they were *his* — they always looked dearly at him, and I was a vain, presump-

tuous, passionate fool. They were to have been married the first time he got furlough. Lovely face! all my life far off and darling as heaven, how can I ever look into you any more? Let me be forgiven; let me kiss you once, as if we were children again in the old farmhouse; no one can see it—even you can't know: it will do you no wrong; once—the only, the last time, my beloved, widowed *sister*."

He pressed his lips to the photograph; his sorrowful eyes grew wet; and, hearing a measured noise of feet, he thrust the articles back into his pocket, drew his cuff across his face, and stood up with a stern, "Who goes there?"

"Men with the stretcher, Captain," answered a corporal, saluting.

My schoolmate raised me tenderly in his arms and laid me on the stretcher. I made one desperate effort, patted his cheek and whispered, "Dear old boy!" then swooned once more with his cry of delight ringing in my ears, and never woke again till the sun was shining brightly into my hospital tent on the northern side of the Rappahannock.

The moans of wounded men, sinking to their final rest, mingled around me with the outcries of those who were fighting their battles over again in the frenzy of delirium. Inflammation had set in, and I was suffering great pain and fever; but my reason was left me, and my first thought was of the friend who had borne my bleeding body and his own broken heart out of last night's hellish hail-storm.

"Briggs!" I cried faintly.

A kind fellow in employ of the Sanitary Commission, who was watching in the tent, came softly to my side with a canteen of cool spring-water and a cup of brandy.

“No — not that — not that!” said I; “where’s Captain Briggs?”

He moistened my lips, and told me he would look about in camp and see. He had not been gone five minutes when I heard a bustle outside the tent and some one say, —

“Where did you find him?”

“He was shot from behind a fence last night, while he was gathering in the wounded,” said another voice.

“No — not in there!” exclaimed a third, hastily; “take it to the next tent — Captain Thirlwall lies in this, badly wounded.”

Take *it*. Who was it that had been *he* last night, and was only *it* this morning? A terrible strength came into me; I crawled off my ground-spread blankets, and pulled myself on my elbows to the door. When they saw my deathly face in the gap of the tent, they hurriedly closed up in front of me, making as if they would conceal from me something which lay still and ghastly on a stretcher. Too late, — I had seen the well-known forehead with its clustering brown curls matted in blood, and one ragged, blue hole in the centre — and seeing that, saw no more. My next four weeks were passed in raving delirium.

When my wife and I sit in the evening by our bedroom fire, our eyes sometimes fall on a worn little daguerreotype, which has been removed from its morocco

case and put on the mantel-picce, in an open frame of black walnut. It represents a bluff-faced, pleasant-eyed school-boy; it was taken during the days of fearful happiness which we spent all together at my mother's cottage by the sea. My mind glances on to another time when a full-grown man bore me under his own body's cover, out of the fire at Fredericksburg. I clasp my wife's hand closer, and as neither can see the other for tears, we know that we are both thinking of Little Briggs.





RAY.

BY HARRIET PRESCOTT SPOFFORD.

SO Beltran was a Rebel.
Vivia stood before the glass, brushing out black shadows from her long, fine hair. There lay the letter as little Jane had left it, as she had let it lie till all the doors had elanged between, as she had laid it down again. She paused, with the brush half lifted, to glanee once more at the clear superscription, to turn it and touch with her finger-tips the firm seal. Then she went on lengthening out the tresses that curled back again at the end like something instinet with life.

How long it had been in coming! — gradual journeys up from those Southern shores, and slumber in some comrade's care till a flag of truce could bear it across beneath the shelter of its white wing. Months had passed. And where was Beltran now? Living, — Vivia had a proud assurance in her heart of that! her heart that went swiftly gliding back into the past, and filling old scenes with fresh fire. Thinking thus, she bent forward with dark, steady gaze, as if she sought for its pictures in the uncertain depths of the mirror, and

there they rose as of old the crystal gave them back to the seeker. It was no gracious woman bending there that she saw, but a scene where the very air infused with sunlight seemed to glow, the house with its wide veranda veiled in vines, and above it towering the rosy eloud of an oleander-tree, behind it the far azure strip of the bay, before it the long low line of sandy beach where the waters of the Gulf forever swung their silver tides with a sullen roar,—for the place was one of those islands that make the perpetual fortifications of the Texan coast. Vivia, a slender little maiden of eleven summers, rocks in a boat a rod from shore, and by her side, his length along the warm wave, his arm along the boat, a boy floats in his linen clothes, an amphibious child, so undersized as to seem but little more than a baby, and yet a year her senior. He swims round and round the skiff in eireling frolies, followed by the great dog who gambols with them, he dives under it and comes up far in advance, he treads water as he returns, and, seizing the painter, draws it forward while she sits there like Thetis guiding her sea-horses. Then, as the sun flings down more fervid showers, together they beach the boat and scamper up the sand, where old Disney, who has been dredging for oysters in the great bed below, crowns his basket with little Ray, and bears him off perched aloft on his bent back. Vivia walks beside the old slave in her infantile dignity, and disregards the sundry attempts of Ray's outstretched arms, till of a sudden the beating play of hoofs runs along the ground, and Beltran, with his morning's game, races by on his fiery mustang, and, scarcely checking his speed as

he passes, stoops from the saddle and lifts the little girl before him. Vivia would look back in triumph upon Ray in his ignoble conveyance, but the affair has already been too much for him, he has flung himself on the instant from old Disney's basket, as if he were careless whether he fell under the horse's feet or not, but knowing perfectly well that Beltran will catch him. And Beltran suddenly pulling up with a fierce rein, does catch him, bestows him with Vivia, slightly to her dainty discomfort, and dashes on. Noon deepens; Vivia does not sleep, she seeks Ray, — Ray who does not sleep either, but who is not to be beguiled. For, one day, the child in his troubled dreams had been found by Beltran with a white coil of fangs and venom for his pillow; and never since has Beltran taken his noontide siesta but Ray watches beside him till the thick brown lashes lift themselves once more. For, if Ray knows what worship is, he would show you Beltran enshrined in his heart, this brother a dozen years his elder, who had hailed his birth with stormy tears of joy, who had carried him for years when he was yet too weak to walk, who in his own full growth would seem to have absorbed the younger's share, were it not that, tiny as Ray may be, his every nerve is steel, made steel, though, by the other, and so trained and supplied and put at his service. It was Beltran who had first flung him astride the saddle and sent him loping off to town alone, but who had secretly followed him from thicket to thicket, and stood ready in the market-place at last to lift him down; it was Beltran who had given him his own rifle, had taught him to take the bird on the wing, had led him out at night to see the great

silent alligator in his scale-armor sliding over the land from the coast and plunging into the fresh waters of the bay, — who took him with him on the long journeys for gathering in the cattle of the vast stock-farm, let him sleep beside himself on the bare prairie-floor, like a man, with his horse tethered to his boot, told him the spot in the game on which to draw his bead, showed him what part to dress, and made him *chef de cuisine* in every camp they crossed; it was he who had taught him how to hold himself in any wild stampede, on the prairie how to conquer fire with fire, to find water as much his element as air; it is Beltran, in short, who has made him this little marvel which at twelve years old he finds himself to be, — this brother who serves him so, and whom he adores, for whom he passionately expresses his devotion, — this brother whom he loves as he loves the very life he lives. So Vivia, too, sits down at Beltran's feet that day, and busies herself with those pink plumes of the spoonbill's wings which he brought home to her, — so that, when he wakes, he sees her standing there like the spirit of his dream, her dark eyes shining out from under the floating shadowy hair, and the rosy wings trembling on her little white shoulders. And just then Beltran has no word for Ray, the customary smiling word always waited for, since his eyes are on the vision at his feet, and straightway the child springs down, springs where he can intercept Beltran's view, seems to rise in his wrath a head above the girl, and, looking at Beltran all the while, slaps Vivia on the cheek. Instantly two hands have clasped about his wrists, two hands that hold him in a vice, and two eyes are gazing down into his own and paralyzing him. Still

the grasp, the gaze, continue; as Vivia watches that look, a great blue glow from those eyes seems to eloud her own brain. The color rises on Ray's cheeks, his angry eyes fall, his chest heaves, his lips tremble, off from the long black lashes spin sprays of tears, he cannot move, he is so closely held, but slowly he turns his head, meets the red lips of the forgiving girl with his, then casts himself with sobs on Beltran's breast. And all that evening, as the sudden heavy clouds drive down and quench sunset and starlight, while they sit about a great fire, Beltran keeps her at his side and Ray maintains his place, and within there is light and love, and without the sand trembles to the shock of sound and the thunder of the surf, and the heaven is full of the wildly flying blast of the Norther.

Still, as Vivia gazed into the silent mirror, the salient points of her life started up as if memory held a torch to them in their dark recesses, and another picture printed its frosty *spiculæ* upon the gray surface of the glass before her. No ardent arch of Southern noontide now, no wealth of flower and leaf, no pomp of regnant summer, but winter has darkened down over sad Northern countries, and white Arctic splendor hedges a lake about with the beauty of incomparable radiance; the trees whose branches overhang the verge are foamy fountains, frozen as they fall; distantly beyond them the crisp upland fields stretch their snowy sparkle to touch the frigid-flashing sapphire of the sky, and bluer than the sky itself their shadows fall about them; every thorn, every stem, is set, a spike of erusted lustre in its icy mail; the tingling air takes the breath in silvery wreaths;

and wherever the gay garment of a skater breaks the monotone with a gleam of crimson or purple, the shining feet beneath chisel their fantastic curves upon a floor that is nothing but one glare of crystal sheen. And here, hero of the scene, glides Beltran, master of the Northern art as school-days made him, skates as of old some young Viking skated, all his being bubbling in a lofty glee, with blue eyes answering this icy brilliance as they dazzle back from the tawny countenance, with every muscle rippling grace and vigor to meet the prond volition, lithely cutting the air, swifter than the swallow's wing in its arrowy precision, careless as the floating flake in effortless motion, skimming along the lucid sheathing that answers his ringing heel with a tune of its own, and swaying in his almost aerial meddum, lightly, easily, as the swimming fish sways to the currents of the tide. Scoring whitely their tracery of intricate lines, the groups go by in whorls, in angles, in sweeping circles, and the ice shrinks beneath them; here a fairy couple slide along, waving and bowing and swinging together; far away some recluse in his pleasure sports alone with folded arms, careening in the outward roll like the mast of a phantom-craft; everywhere inshore clusters of ruddy-cheeked boys race headlong with their hawkey-sticks, and with their wild cries, making benders where the ice surges in a long swell; and constantly in Beltran's wake slips Vivian, a scarlet shadow, while a clumsy little black outline is ever designing itself at her heels as Ray strives in vain to perfect the mysteries of the left stroke. All about, the keen air breathes its exhilaration, and the glow seems to penetrate the pores till the very blood

dances along filled with such intoxicating influence; all above, the afternoon heaven deepens till it has no hidden richness, and between one and the pale gold of the coldly reddening horizon the white air seems hollow as the flaw in some great transparent jewel. Still they wind away in their gladness, when hurriedly Beltran reaches his hand for the heedless Vivia's, and hurriedly she sees terrifying grooves spreading round them, a great web-work of cracks,—the awful ice lifts itself, sinks, and out of a monstrous fissure chill death rises to meet them and engulf them. In an instant, Ray, who might have escaped, has hurled himself upon them, and then, as they all struggle for one drowning breath in the flood, Vivia dimly divines through her horror an arm stretched first towards Ray, snatched back again, and bearing her to safety. Ray has already scrambled from the shallow breach where his brother alone found bottom; waiting hands assist Beltran; but as she lingers that moment shivering on the brink, blindly remembering the double movement of that arm beneath the ice, she silently asks, with a thrill, if he suffered Ray to save himself because he was a boy, and could, or because—because she was Vivia!

Southern noontide, winter twilight, lost themselves again, as Vivia gazed, in the soft starry gleam of an April midnight. A quiet room, dimly lighted by a flame that dying eyes no longer see; two figures kneeling, one at either side of the mother,—the little apple-blossom of a mother brought up to die among her own people,—one shaking with his storm of sobs, the other supporting the dear, weary head on his strong breast, and stifling

his very heart-beat lest it stir the frail life too roughly. And the mother lifts the lids of her faint eyes, as when a parting vapor reveals rifts of serene heaven, gazes for a moment into the depths of her first-born's tenderness, gropes darkly for his fingers and for the hot little hand thrust eagerly forth to meet hers, closes one about the other, and folds them both upon her own heart. Then Beltran bends and gathers from the lips the life that kindled his. With a despairing cry, Ray flings himself forward, and dead and living lie in Beltran's arms, while the strong convulsion of his heart rends up a hollow groan from its emptiness. And Vivian draws aside the curtain, and the gentle wind brings in the sweet earthy scent of fresh furrows lately wet with showers, and the ever-shifting processions of the silent stars unveil themselves of gauzy cloud, and glance sadly down with their abiding eyes upon these fleeting shadows.

After all, who can deny that there is magic in a mirror, a weird atmosphere imprisoned between the metal and the glass, borrowing the occult powers of the gulf of space, and returning to us our own wraith and apparition at any hour of the day or night when we smite it with a ray of light, — reaching with its searching power into the dark places where we have hidden ourselves, and seizing and projecting them in open sight? Who doubts that this sheeny panel on so many walls, with wary art slurring off its elusive gleam, could, at the one compelling word, paint again the reflections of all on which it silently dreams in its reticent heart, — the joy, the grief, the weeping face, the laughing lip, the lover's kiss, the tyrant's sneer, almost the crouched and bleeding soul on which that sneer

descended, of which some wandering beam earried record? When we remember the violin, inwardly ridged with the vibrations of old tunes, old discords, who would wonder to find some eharactery of light traeing its indelible script within the erystal substance? And here, if Vivia saw one other scene blaze out before her and vanish, why not believe, for faney's sake, that it was as real a pieture as the image of the dark and beautiful girl herself bending there with the earmine stain upon her cheek, the glowing, parted lips, the shining eyes, the shadowy hair?

Late spring down on the Maryland farm: you know it by the intense blue through that quaint window draped with such a lushness of vines, such a glory of blossom. In at the open door, whose frame is arabesqued with hanging sprays of sweetbrier, with the pendent nest, with fluttering moth-wings sunshine-dusted, with erowds of bursting buds, pours the mellow sun in one great stream, pours from the peach-orehards the fragrant breeze laden with bird-song. A girl, standing aside, with elapsed hands drooping before her, her gaze upon a shadow on the floor in the midst of that broad stream of light. Casting that shadow, under the lintel, a young man elad for travel. Since he left his Southern home, ruin has befallen it; he dares not ask one lapped in luxury to share such broken fortunes as his seem to-day, even though such stout shoulders, so valiant a heart, buffet them. If she loves, it is enough; they can wait; their treasure neither moth nor rust can corrupt; their jewel is imperishable. If she loves — He is looking in her eyes, holding to her his hands. Slowly the girl meets his glance. A long look, one long, silent look, infinitude

in its assurance, its glow wrapping her, blue and smiling as heaven itself, reaching him like the evening star seen through tears, — a word, a touch, had profaned with a trait of earthliness so remote, so spiritual a betrothal. He goes, and still the upward-smiling girl sees the sunshine, hears the bird-song, — a boy dashes by the door and down the path to meet the last, close-lingering embrace of two waiting arms at the gate, — and then there is nothing but Vivia bending and gazing at herself in the glass with a flushed and fevered eagerness of rapture.

“The wild, sweet tunes that darkly deep
 Thrill through thy veins and shroud thy sleep,
 That swing thy blood with proud, glad sway,
 And beat thy life’s arterial play, —
 Still wilt thou have this music sweep
 Along thy brain its pulsing leap, —
 Keep love away! keep love away!

“The joy of peace that wide and high
 Like light floods through the soaring sky,
 The day divine, the night akin,
 Heaven in the heart, ah, wilt thou win,
 The secret of the hoarded years,
 Life rounded as the shining spheres, —
 Let love come in! let love come in!”

she sang, to ease her heart of its swelling gladness.

But here Vivia dared not concentrate her recollections, dared not dally with such distant delight, — twisted and tossed her hair into its coils, and once more opened the letter. Ray had not lived for three years under converging influences, years which are glowing wax beneath

the seal of fresh impressions, years when one puts off or takes on the tendencies of a lifetime, — Ray had not lived those three school-years without contracting habits, whims, determinations of his own : let her have Beltran's reasons to meet Ray's objections.

They were up at the little meadow-side cottage of Mrs. Vennard, Ray's maternal aunt, a quiet widow, who was glad to receive her dying sister in her house a year and a half ago, as she had often received her boys before, and who was still willing to eke out her narrow income with the board of one nephew and any summer guest ; and as that summer guest, owing to an old family-friendship that overlooked differences of rank and wealth, Vivia had, for many a season, been established. Here, when bodings of trouble began to darken her sunny fields, she had, in early spring, withdrawn again, leaving her maiden aunt to attend to the affairs of the homestead, or to find more luxurious residence in watering-places or cities, as she chose. For Vivia liked the placid life and freedom of the cottage, and here, too, she had oftenest met those dear friends to whom one winter her father, long since dead, had taken her, and half of all that was pleasant in her life had inwoven itself with the simple surroundings of the place. Here, in that fatal spring when the first tocsin alarmed the land, Ray, now scarcely any longer a boy, yet with a boy's singleness of mind, though possessing neither patience nor power for subtleties of difficult reason and truth, thinking of no lonely portion, but of the one great fact of country, had been fired with spontaneous fervor, and had ever since been like some restive steed clamping the bit

and quivering to start. As for Vivia, she was a Maryland woman. Too burningly indignant, the blood bubbled in her heart for words sometimes, and she would be glad of Beltran's weapons with which to confront Ray when he returned from Boston, whither, the day before, without a word's explanation, he had betaken himself. So she turned again to the open letter, and scanned its weightiest paragraphs.

“There is a strange reversal of right and wrong, when the American Peace Society declares itself for war. There is, then, a greater evil than war, even than civil war, with its red, fratricidal hands? — Slavery. But, could that be destroyed, it would be the first great evil ever overcome by force of arms. They fight tangibly with an intangible foe; tangible issues rise between them; the black, intangible phantom hovers safe behind. But even should they visibly succeed, is there not left the very root of the matter to put forth fresh growth, — that moral condition in which the thing lived at all? An evil that has its source in the heart must be eradicated by slow medicinal cure of the blood. To fight against the stars in their courses, one must have brands of starry temper. No sudden shocks of battle will sweep Slavery from the sphere. Can one conquer the universe by proclamation? ‘Lyra will rise to-morrow,’ said some one, after Cæsar reformed the calendar. ‘Doubtless,’ replied Cicero, ‘there is an edict for it.’ But, believe me, there can be no broad, stupendous evil, unless it be a part of God’s plan; and in his own time, without other help from us than the performance of our duty, it will slough off its slime and rise into some fair

superstructure. Our efforts dash like spray against the rock, — the spray is broken, the rock remains. To annihilate evil with evil, — that is an error in itself against which every man is justified in taking up his sword.

“So far, I have allowed the sin. Yet, sin or not, in this country the estate of the slave is unalterable. Segregately, the institution is their protection. For, though there is no record of the contact of superior and inferior races on a basis of equality, where the inferior did not absorb the superior, yet if every slave were set free to-day, imbruted through generations, it could not be on a basis of equality that we should meet, and they would be as inevitably sunk and lost as the detritus that a river washes into the sea. If the black stay here, it must be as a menial. In his own latitudes, where, after the third generation, the white man ceases to exist, he is the stronger; there the black man is king: let him betake himself to his realm. Abolition is impracticable, colonization feasible; on either is gunpowder wasted: one cannot explode a lie by the blast.

“But saying the worst of our incubus that can be said, could all its possible accumulation of wrong and woe exceed that of four years of such a war as this? Think a moment of what this land was, what a great beacon and celestial city across the waves to the fugitives from tyranny; think of our powerful pride in eastern seas, in western ports, when each ship’s armament carried with it the broadside of so many sovereign States, when each citizen felt his own hand nerved with a people’s strength, when no young man woke in the morning without the perpetual aurora of high hopes before him,

when peace and plenty were all about us, — and then think of misery at every hearth, of civilization thrust back a century, of the prestige of freedom lost among the nations, of the way paved for despots. And how needlessly!

“They taunted us — us, the source of all their wealth — with the pauper’s deserting the poor-house; we put it to proof; when, lo! with a hue and cry, the bloodhounds are upon us, the very dogs of war. So needless a war! For has it not been a fundamental principle that every people has a right to govern itself? We chose to exercise that right. Was it worth the while to refuse it? Exhausted, drained, dispeopled, they may chain a vassal province to their throne; but, woe be to them, upon that conquering day, their glory has departed from them! The first Revolution was but the prologue to this: that was sealed in blood; in this might have been demonstrated the progress made under eighty years of freedom, by a peaceful separation. It is the Flight of the Tartar Tribe anew, and the whole barbarous Northern nation pours its hordes after, hangs on the flank, harasses, impedes, slaughters, — but we reach the shadow of the Great Wall at last. If we had not the right to leave the league, how had we the right to enter? If we had not the right to leave, they also had not the right to withhold us. Yet, when we entered, resigning much, receiving much, retaining more, we were each a unit, a power, a commonwealth, a nation, or, as we chose to term it, a State, — as much a state as any of the great states of Europe, as Britain, as France, as Spain, and jealously ever since have we individually re-

garded any infringement on our integrity. That, and not the mere tangle of race that in time must unravel itself, is the question of the age. Long ago it was said that our people, holding it by transmission, never having struggled for it, would some day cease rightly to value the one chief bulwark of liberty. Nothing is more true. They of the North will lose it, we of the South shall gain it; for, battling on a grander scale than our ancestors, the South is to-day taking out the great *habeas corpus* of States!"

No matter whether all this was sophistry or truth. Beltran had said it, — that was enough; so strongly did she feel his personality in what he wrote, that the soul was exultant, jubilant, defiant, within her. Other words there were in the letter, such words as are written to but one; the blood swept up to Vivia's lips as she recalled them, and her heart sprang and bounded like one of those balls kept in perpetual play by the leaping, bubbling column of a fountain. She was in one of those dangerous states of excitement after which the ancients awaited disaster. That last picture of the mirror dazzled her vision again; she saw the sunshine, smelt the perfume, heard the bird-song. How a year had changed the scene! The house was a barrack; now down in her Maryland peach-orchards the black muzzles of Federal cannon yawned, and under the flickering shadows and sunshine the grimy gunners, knee-deep in grass and dew, brushed away the startled clover-blooms, as they touched fire to the breach. Beltran was a Rebel. Vivia was a Rebel too! She ran down stairs into her little parlor overflowing with

flowers. As she walked to and fro, the silent keys of her piano-forte met her eye. Excellent conductors. Half standing, half sitting, she awoke its voices, and, to a rolling, silvery thunder of accompaniment, commenced singing, —

“ The lads of Kilmarnock had swords and had spears
And lang-bladed daggers to kill cavaliers,
But they shrunk to the wall and the causey left free
At one toss of the bonnet of Bonny Dundee!
So fill up my cup, come fill up my can,
Saddle my horses and call up my men,
Open your west-port and let me gae free,
For it 's up with the bounnets of Bonny Dundee ! ”

Some one in the distance, echoing the last line with an emphasis, caught her ear in the pause. It was Ray. He had already returned, then. She snatched the letter and sped into the kitchen, where she was sure to find him.

Mrs. Vennard rocked in her miniature sitting-room at one side, contentedly matching patchwork. Little Jane Vennard, her step-daughter, — usually at work in the mills, but, since their close, making herself busy at home, whither she had brought a cookery-book through which Ray declared he expected to eat his way, — bus-tled about from room to room. Ray sat before the fire in the kitchen and toasted some savory morsel suspended on a string athwart the blaze.

“ Where have you been, Ray ? ” said Vivia, approaching, with her glowing cheeks, her sparkling eyes. “ And what are you doing now ? ”

"Trying camp-life again," replied Ray, looking up at her in a fixed admiration.

"I've had a letter from Beltran."

"Oh! where is he?" cried Ray.

"Beltran is in camp."

"And where?"

"Perhaps on the Rio Grande, perhaps on the Potomac."

"Do you mean to say," cried Ray, springing up, while string and all fell into the coals, "that Beltran, my brother —"

"Is a Rebel."

"Then I am a rebel too," said Ray, chokingly, sitting down again, and mechanically stooping to pick up the burning string, — "a rebel to him!"

"You won't be a rebel to him, if you'll listen to reason, — his reason."

"He's got no reason. It's only because he was there."

"Now, Raymond Lamar! if you talk so, you sha'n't read the letter!"

"I don't want to read it."

"Have you left off loving Beltran, because he differs from you?"

"Left off loving Beltran!"

Vivia waited a moment, leaning on the back of his chair, and then Ray, bending, covered his face with his hands, and the large tears oozed from between his brown fingers.

Little Jane, whipping the frothy snow of her eggs, went on whipping all the harder for fear Ray should

know she saw him. And Vivia, with one hand upon his head, took away the brown fingers, that her own cool, fragrant palm might press upon his burning lids. Such sudden tears belong to such tropic natures. For there was no anger or sullenness in Ray's grief; he was just and simply sorry.

"He must have forgotten me," said Ray, after a sober while.

"There was this note for you in mine, and a draft on New York, because he thought you might be in arrears."

"No, I'm not. Auntie can have the draft, though; she may need it before I come back," said Ray, brokenly, gazing into the fire. "Do you suppose Beltran wrote mine or yours first?"

"Yours."

"Then you've the last thing he ever set his hand to, perhaps!"

"Don't talk so, child!" said Vivia, with an angry shiver. "Come back! Where are you going?"

"I enlisted, yesterday, in the Kansas Cavalry."

"Great heavens, Ray! was there not another regiment in all the world than one to be sent down to New Mexico to meet Beltran and the Texan Rangers?" cried Vivia, wringing her hands.

Ray was on his feet again, a swarm of expletives buzzing inarticulately at his lips.

"I never thought of that," said he, whiter than ashes.

"What made you? O, what made you?"

"There was no other company. I liked this captain. He gave me to-day's furlough. I'm going to-night; little Jane's promised to fix my traps; she's making me

these cookies now, you see. Pshaw! Beltran's up on the Potomac, or else you could n't have gotten this letter, — don't you know? You made my heart jump into my mouth!"

And, resuming his seat, to find his string and jack in einders, he turned round astride his chair and commenced notehing his initials into its back, with cautious glances at his aunt.

"That's for little Jane to cry over after I'm gone," said he.

"Ray — How do you think Beltran will like it?"

"I can't help what Beltran likes. I shall be doing God's work."

"Beltran says God does his own work. He only requires of us our duty."

"That is my duty."

"You feel, Ray, as if you were possessed by the holy ardor of another Sir Galahad."

"I feel, Vivia, that I shall give what strength I have towards ridding the world of its foulest disease."

"With what a good grace that comes from you!"

"With all the better grace."

"The old Berserker rage over again!"

"Quite as fine as running amuck."

"Ray, the race that does not rise for itself deserves its fate."

"Vivia, no race deserves such a fate as this one has found."

"Idle! I have seen slavery; own slaves: there is nothing monstrous in it."

"In Maryland."

"Anywhere."

"Wailing children, sundered families, women under the lash —"

"You know very well, Ray, that there is a law against the separation of families."

"I never heard of it."

"Audubon says there is."

"A little bird told him," interpolated Jane.

"But I've seen them separated."

"I don't believe," urged Vivia, "but for exeptional abuses, there's a system providing for a happier peasantry on the face of the earth."

"It can't be a good system that allows such abuses."

"There are even abuses of the saeraments."

"Pshaw, Vivia!"

"Well, Ray, I don't believe in this pseudo-chivalry of yours, any more than Beltran does."

"If Beltran said blaek was white, you'd think that true!"

"If Beltran said so, it *would* be true."

"It's no more likely that he should be right than that I should be."

"You could n't have spoken so about Beltran once!"

"Well, blaek or white, slave or free, never think I shall sit by and see my country fall to ruins."

"Your country? Do you suppose you love it any more than I do?"

"You're a woman."

"Suppose I am a woman, you unkind boy —"

"Well, you only love half of it, — the Southern half."

"I love my whole country!" cried Vivia, all aflame.

t "I love these purple, rust-stained granites here, the great savannas there, — the pine forests, the sea-like prairies, — every river rolling down its rocky bed, — every inch of its beautiful, glorious soil, — all its proud, free people. I love my whole country!"

"Only you hate some of its parasites. But Beltran would tell you that you have n't got any country. You may love your native State. As for country, it's nothing but a — what-you-may-call-it."

"Very true. It is in observing the terms of that what-you-may-call-it, — that federation, that bond, — in mutual concessions, in fraternal remembrances, that we gain a country. And what a country!"

"Yes, what a country, Vivia! And shall I consent to resign an atom of it while there's a drop of blood in my body, to lose a single grain of its dust? When Beltran brought me here three years ago, I sailed day and night up a mighty river, from one zone into another, — sailed for weeks between banks that were still my own country. And if I had ever returned, we should have passed by the thundering ledges of New England, Jersey surfs and shallows, the sand-bars of the Carolinas, the shores of Florida lying like a faint green cloud long and low upon the horizon, — sailing a thousand miles again in our own waters. Enormous borders! and throughout their vast stretch happiness and promise! And shall I give such dominion to the first traitor that demands it? No! nor to the thousandth! There she lies, bleeding, torn, prostrate, a byword! Why, Vivia, this was my country, she that made me, reared me, gladdened me! It is the new crusade. I understand none of your

sylogisms. My country is in danger. Here's my hand!"

And Ray stood ereet, bristling and fiery, as some one reddening in the very light of battle.

And, answering him only with flashing eyes, Vivian sang, in her triumphant, thrilling tones, —

“Hark to a wandering child’s appeal,
Maryland! my Maryland!
My mother State, to thee I kneel,
Maryland! my Maryland!
For life and death, for woe and weal,
Thy peerless chivalry reveal,
And gird thy beauteous limbs with steel,
Maryland! my Maryland!”

“You’re a wicked girl, Vivian, if you *are* as beautiful as Phryne!” exclaimed Ray, while little Jane picked herself up from the table, across which she had been leaning with both arms and her dish-towel, and staring forgetfully at him.

Vivian laughed.

“Well, you young fanatic,” said she, “we can’t convert each other. We are both incontrovertible. Let us be friends. One needs more time than we have to quarrel in.”

“Yes,” said Ray. “I am going this afternoon, and I shall drink of every river west of the Mississippi before I come back. It’s a wild life, a royal life; I am thirsty for its excitement and adventure.”

“Jane,” called Mrs. Vennard from within, “did you find all the nests to-day?”

"All but two, ma'am," said little Jane, as she let a tempting odor escape from the tin oven. "The black hen got over the fence last night; she's down in the lot. And the cropple-crown laid away."

"You 'd better get them."

"Yes, ma'am."

"If you 'd just as lief."

"O yes, ma'am!"

"We 'll go, too," said Ray.

"O no, you need n't."

"We 'd like to, little Jane. Are the cookies done? By George! don't they look like manna? They 'll last all the way to Fort Riley. And be manna in the wilderness. Smoking hot. Have some, Vivia? Little Jane, I say 't would be jolly, if you 'd go along and cook for the regiment."

"Is that all you 'd want of me?"

"It 's a wonderful region for grasshoppers out there, you know; you 'd improvise us such charming dishes of locusts and wild honey! As for cookies, a snowflake and a sunbeam, and there they are," said Ray, making inroads on the Fort Riley stores; while little Jane set down a cup of beaten cream by his side.

"Janets are trumps! Vivia, don't you wish you were going to the war?"

"Yes," said Vivia.

"There is something in it, isn't there?" said Ray. "You 'll sit at home, and how your blood will boil! What keeps you women alive? Darning stockings, I suppose. There 's only one thing I dread: 't would be hard to read of other men's glory, and I lying flat on

my back. Would you make me cookies then, little Jane?"

Little Jane only gave him one swift, shy look: there was more promise in it than in many a vow. In return, Ray tossed her the sparkle of his dancing glance an instant, and then his eager fancies caught him again.

"We read of them," said he, "those splendid scenes. What can there be like acting them? Ah, what a throb there is in it! The rush, the roar, the onslaught, the clanging trumpet, the wreathing smoke, and the mad horses. Dauntlessly defying danger. Ravishing fame from the teeth of the battery. See in what a great leap of the heart you spring with the forlorn hope up the escalade! Your soul kindles and flashes with your blade. You are nothing but a wrath. To die so, with all one's spirit at white-heat, awake, alert, aflame, must send one far up and along the heights of being. And if you live, there are other things to do; and how the women feel their fiery pulses fly, their hot tears start, as you go by, thinking of all the tumult, the din, the daring, the danger, and you a part of it!"

Little Jane was trembling and tying on her bonnet. As for Vivian, she burst into tears.

"O Ray!" sobbed she, "I wish I were a man!"

"I don't!" said he. "O, it's uproarious! Come, let's follow our leader. We'll bring you back the crop-crown, auntie."

And so they departed, while, breaking into fresh carols, ringing and dulcet, as they went, Vivian's voice resounded till the woods pealed to the echo:—

“ He waved his proud arm, and the trumpets were blown,
The kettle-drums elashed, and the horsemen rode on,
Till o’er Ravelston crags and on Clermiston lea
Died away the wild war-notes of Bonny Dundee ! ”

Pursuing the white sun-bonnet down the pasture, Ray kept springing ahead with his elastic foot, threshing the juniper-plats that little Jane had already searched, and scattering about them the pungent fragrance of the sweet-fern thickets, — the breath of summer itself; then returning for a sober pace or two, would take off his hat, thrust a hand through the masses of his hair that looked like carved ebony, and show Vivia that his shadow was exactly as long as her own. And Vivia saw that all this beating and longing and burning had loosened and shot into manhood a nature that under the snow of its eightieth winter would yet be that of a boy. Ray could never be any taller than he was to-day, but he had broad, sturdy shoulders and a close-knit, nervous frame, while in his honest, ugly face, that, arch or grave, kept its due contrast of black eyes and brilliant teeth, there was as much to love as in the superb beauty of Beltran.

They had reached the meadow’s edge at length; Ray was growing more serious, as the time hurried, when little Jane, with a smothered exclamation, prepared to cross the wall. For there they were, sleek and glossy, chattering gently to each other, pecking about, the wind blowing open their feathers till they became top-heavy, and looking for all the world, as Janet said, like pretty little old ladies dressed up to go out to tea. And near them, quite at home in the marshy domain, strutted and lunched a fine gallant of a turkey, who ruffled his red-

ness, dropped all his plumes about him, and personated nothing less than some stately dowager sailing in flounces and brocades. Ray caught back their discoverer, launched a few stepping-stones across, and, speeding from foothold to foothold, very soon sent His Magnificence fluttering over the fence and forward before them, and returned with the two little runaway hens slung over his arm, where, after a trifle of protestation and a few subdued cackles of crestfallen acquiescence, having a great deal to tell the other hens on reaching home once more, they very contentedly enjoyed the new aspect of the world upsidedown.

"And here 's where she 's made her nest," said little Jane, stepping aside from a tangle of blackberry-vines, herds-grass, and harebells, where lay a half-dozen pullet pearls. "A pretty mother you 'd make, miss, gadding and gossiping down in the meadow with that naughty black hen! Who do you suppose is going to bring up your family for you? Did you speak to the butterflies to hatch them under their yellow wings? I shall just tie you to an old shoe!"

And taking the winking, blinking culprits from Ray, she ran along home to make ready his package, for which there was not more than an hour left. Vivian turned to follow, for she also wanted to help; but Ray, lingering by the wall and pointing out some object, caused her to remain.

"It will be such a long time before I see it again," said he.

They leaned upon the stone-wall, interspersed, overgrown, and veiled with moss and maiden-hair and blos-

soming brambles. Before them lay the long meadow, sprinkled with sunbeams, green to its last ripe richness, discolored only where the tall grass made itself hoary in the breeze, or where some trail of dun brown ran up through all intermediate tints to break in a glory of gold at the foot of the screen of woods that far away gloomed like a frowning fortress of shade, but, approaching, feathered off its tips in the glow, and let the mellow warmth of olive light gild to a lustrous depth all its darkly verdurous hollows. Near them the vireos were singing loud and sweet.

"Vivia," said Ray, after a pause, "if I should never come back —"

"You will come back."

"But if I never did, — should you greatly care?"

"Beginning to despond! That is good! You won't go, then?"

"If the way lay over the bottomless pit, I should go."

"And you can't get free, if you want to?"

"No!"

"Ray, I could easily raise money enough upon my farm to buy —"

"If you talk so," said Ray, whipping off the flowers, but looking up at her as he beut, and smiling, "I shall inform against you, and have your farm confiscated."

"What! I can't talk as I please in a free country? O, it's not free, then! They've discovered at length that there's something better than freedom. They sent a woman to prison this spring for eating an orange in the street. They confiscated a girl's wedding-gown the other day, and uow they've confiscated her bridegroom.

O, it's a great cause that cau't get along without my wedding-gown! *Noblesse oblige!*”

“It takes more wedding-gowns than yours, Vivian. Dips them in mourning.”

“Pray God it won't take mine yet!” cried she, with sudden fire.

“Vivian,” said Ray, facing her, “I asked you a question. Why didn't you answer it? Shouldn't you care?”

“You know, dear child, I should, — we all should, terribly.”

“But, Vivian, I mean, that you — that I —”

He paused, the ardor and eagerness suspended on cheek and lip, for Vivian met his glance and understood its simple speech, — since in some degree a dark eye lets you into the soul, where a blue one bluffs you off with its blaze, and under all its lucent splendor is as impenetrable as a turquoise. A girl of more vanity would have waited for plainer words. But Vivian only placed her warm hand on his, and said gently, —

“Ray, I love Beltran.”

There was a moment's quiet, while Ray looked away, — supporting his chin upon one hand, and a black cloud sweeping torridly down the stern face. One sharp struggle. A moment's quiet. Into it a wild rose kept shaking sweetness. After it a vireo broke into tremulous melody, gushing higher, fuller, stronger, clearer. Ray turned, his eyes wet, his face beaming. Said he, —

“I am more glad than if it were myself!”

Then Vivian bent, and, flushed with noble shame, she kissed him on the lips. A word, a grasp, she was leav-

ing alone over the old stone-wall, the birds were piping and fluting about her, and Ray was gone.

A month of rushing over land and lake, of resting at the very spots where he and Beltran had stayed together three years ago, of repeating the brief strolls they took, of reading again and again that last note, and Ray had crossed the great river of the West, and reached the headquarters of his regiment. There, induing their uniforms, and training their horses, all of which were yet to be shod, they brushed about the country, and skirmished with guerillas, until going into camp for thorough drill preparatory to active service.

Convoying government-trains through a region where were assembled in their war-paint thousands of Indians from the wild tribes of the plains and hills was venturous work enough, but it was not that to which Ray aspired. He must be one of those cherubim who on God's bidding speed; he could not serve with those who only stand and wait. His hot soul grew parched and faint with longiug, and all the instincts of his battling blood began to war among themselves. At length one night there was hammering and elinking at the red field-fires, and by daybreak they were off for a mad gallop over plain and mountain, down river-banks and across deserts into New Mexico.

Fording the shallow Arkansas, trailing their way through prairie and timber, — reaching and skirting the seorehing stretch, — riding all day, consumed with thirst, from green-mantling pool to pool, till the last lay sixty miles behind them, and men and horses made desperately

for the stream, dashing in together to drink their fill, when they found it again foaming down the centre of its vast level plain, that receded twenty miles on either side without shrub or hillock, — finally their path wound in among the hills, and a day dawned that Ray will never forget.

The stars were large and solemn, hovering golden out of the high, dark heaven, as the troop defiled into the *cañon*; they glinted with a steely lustre through the roof of fallen trees that arched the gorge from side to side, then a wind of morning blew and they grew pallid and wan in a shining haze, and, towering far up above them, vaguely terrific in shadow, the horsemen saw the heights they were to climb all grayly washed in the night-dew. So they swept up the mountain-side in their gay and breezy career, on from ascent to ascent, from abutment to abutment, crossing shrunken torrents, winding along sheer precipices, up into the milky clouds of heaven itself, till the rosy flare of dawn bathed all the air about them. There they halted, while, struggling after them, the first triumphant beam struck the bosses of their harness to glittering jewel-points, and, breaking through layer on layer of curdling vapor at their feet, suffused it to a wondrous fleece, where carnation and violet and the fire that lurks in the opal, wreathing with gorgeous involution, seethed together, until, at last, the whole resplendent mist wound itself away in silver threads on the spindles of the wind. Then boot in the stirrup again, onward, over the mountain's ridge, desolate rock defying the sun, downward, plunging through hanging forests, clearing the chasm, bridging ravines, and still

at noon the eagles, circling and screaming above them, shook over them the dew from their plumes. Downward afresh in their wild ride, the rainbows of the cascades flying beside them, their afternoon shadows streaming up behind them, darkness beginning to gather in the deeps below them, the mighty mountain-masses around rearing themselves impenetrably in boding blackness and mystery against the yellow gleam, the purple breath of evening wrapping them, the dew again, again the stars, and they camped at the foot of a spur of hills with a waterfall for sentry on their left.

Through all the dash of the day, Ray had been in sparkling spirits, a very ecstacy of excitement, brimmed with an exuberance of valiant glee that played itself away in boyish freaks of daring and reckless acts of horsemanship. Now a loftier mood had followed, and, still wrought to some extreme tension, full of blind anticipation and awful assurance, he sat between the camp-fires, his hands clasped over his knees, and watched the evening star where it hung in a cleft of the rocks and seemed like the advent of some great spirit of annunciation. The tired horses had been staked out to graze, a temporary abatis erected, scouting-parties sent off in opposite directions, and at last the frosty air grew mild and mellow over the savory steam of broiling steaks and coffee smoking on beds of coals. There was a moment's lull in the hum of the little encampment, in all the jest and song and jingling stir of this scornfully intrepid company; perhaps for an instant the sense of the wilderness overawed them; perhaps it was only the customary precursor of increasing murmur; — before leaving his place,

Ray suddenly stooped and laid his ear on the earth. There it was! Far off, far off, the phantasmal stroke of hoofs, rapid, many, unswerving. It had come, — all that he had awaited, — fate, or something else. Low and clear in the distance one bugle blew blast of warning. When he rose, the great yellow planet, wheeling slowly down the giant cleft in the rock, had vanished from sight.

Every man was on his feet, the place in alarm. Behind and beside them loomed the precipice and the waterfall; — there was surrender, there was conquest; there was no retreat. The fires were extinguished, the breastworks strengthened, weapons adjusted, and all the ireful preparations for hasty battle made. Then they expected their foe. Slowly over the crown of the mountain above them an aurora crept and brandished its spears.

As they waited there those few breathless moments, Ray examined his rifle coolly enough, and listened to the chirp of a solitary cricket that sung its thin strain so unbrokenly on the edge of strife as to represent something sublime in its petty indifference. He was stationed on the extreme left; near him the tumult of the torrent drowned much discordant noise, its fairy scarf forever forming and falling and floating on the evening air. He thought of Vivia sitting far away and looking out upon the quiet starlight night; then he thought of swampy midnight lairs, with maddened men in fevered covert there, — of little children crying for their mothers, — of girls betrayed to hell, — of flesh and blood at price, — of blistering, crisping fagot and stake to-day, — of all

the anguish and despair down there before him. And with the vivid sting of it such a wrath raged along his veins, such a holy fire, that it seemed there were no arms tremendous enough for his handling, through his shut teeth darted imprecatory prayers for the power of some almighty vengeance, his soul leaped up in impatient fury, his limbs tingled for the death-grapple, when suddenly sound surged everywhere about them and they were in the midst of conflict. Silver trumpet-peals and clash and clang of iron, crying voices, whistling, singing, screaming shot, thunderous drum-rolls, sharp sheet of flame and instant abyss of blackness, horses' heads vaulting into sight, spurts of warm blood upon the brow, the bullet rushing like a blast beside the ear, all the terrible tempest of attack, trampled under the flashing hoof, climbing, elinehing, slashing, back-falling beneath creaking revolvers, hand to hand in the night, both hands welded in one like hot and fusing metal, a spectral struggle of shuddering horror only half guessed by lurid gleams and under the light eloud flying across the stars. Clearly and remotely over the plain the hidden east sent up a glow into the sky; its reflection lay on Ray; he fought like one possessed of a demon, scattering destruction broadcast, so fiercely his anger wrapped him, white and formidable. Fresh onset after repulse, and, like the very crest of the toppling wave, one shadowy horseman in all the dark front, spurring forward, the fight reeling after him, the silver lone star fitfully flashing on his visor, the boy singled for his rifle; — meeting such fearless rivalry, his fall were the fall of a hundred. Something hindered; the marksman delayed an instant; he would not waste a

shot ; and watching him, the dim outline, the sweeping sabre, the proud prowess, a strange yearning pity seized Ray, and he had half the mind to spare. In the midst of the shock and uproar there came to him a pulse of the brain's double action ; he seemed long ago to have loved, to have admired, to have gloried in this splendid valor. But with the hint, and the humanity of it, back poured the ardor of his sacred devotion, all the impulsions of his passionate purpose : here was God's work ! And then, with one swift bound of magnificent daring and defiance, the horseman confronted him, the forefeet of his steed planted firmly half up the abatis, and his steel making lightnings round about him. There was a blinding flare of light full upon Ray's fiery form ; in the sudden succeeding darkness horseman and rider towered rigid like a monolith of black marble. A great voice cried his name, a sabre went hurtling in one shining crescent across the white arc of the waterfall. Too late ! There was another flare of light, but this time on the rider's face, a sound like the rolling of the heavens together in a scroll, and Ray, in one horrid, dizzy blaze, saw the broad gleam of the ivory brow, of the azure fire in the eyes, heard the heavy, downfalling crash, and, leaping over the abatis, deep into the midst of the slippery, raging death below, seized and drew something away, and fell upon it prostrate. There, under the tossing torrent, dragging himself up to the seal of their agony and their reproach, Ray looked into those dead eyes, which, lifted beyond the everlasting stars, felt not that he had crossed their vision.

Far away from outrage and disaster, many a weary

stretch of travel, the meadow-side cottage basked in the afternoon sunlight of late Indian-summer. All the bare sprays of its shadowing limes quivered in the warmth of their purple life against a divine depth of heaven, and the woody distances swathed themselves in soft blue smoke before the sighing south-wind.

Round the girl who sat on the low door-stone, with idle hands crossed before her, puffs of ravishing resinous fragrance floated and fainted. Two butterflies, that spread their broad yellow wings like detached flakes of living sunshine stolen out of the sweet November weather, fluttered between the glossy darkness of her hair and a little posthumous rose, that, blowing beside the door, with time only half to unfold its white petals, surveyed the world in a quaint and sad surprise.

Vivia looked on all the tender loveliness of the dying year with a listless eye: waiting, weary waiting, makes the soul torpid to all but its pain. It was long since there had been any letter from Ray. In all this oppression of summer and of autumn there had come no report of Beltran. Her heart had lost its proud assurance, worn beneath the long strain of such suspense. Could she but have one word from him, half the term of her own life would be dust in the balance. A thousand fragmentary purposes were ever flitting through her thought. If she might know that he was simply living, if she could be sure he wanted her, she would make means to break through that dividing line, to find him, to battle by his side, to die at his feet! Her Beltran! so grave, so good, so heroic! and the thought of him in all his pride and beauty and power, in all his lofty

gentleness and tender passion, in his strength tempered with genial complaisance and gracious courtesy, sent the old glad life, for a second, spinning from heart to lip.

The glassy lake began to ruffle itself below her, feeling the pulses of its interfluent springs, or sending through unseen sluices word of nightfall and evening winds to all its clustering companions that darkened their transparent depths in forest-shadows. As she saw it, and thought how soon now it would ice itself anew, the remembrance rushed over her, like a warm breath, of the winter's night after their escape from its freezing pool, when Beltran sat with them roasting chestnuts and spicing ale before the fire that so gayly crackled up the kitchen-chimney, a night of cheer. And how had it all faded! whither had they all separated? where were those brothers now? Heaven knew.

It had been a hard season, these months at the cottage. The price of labor had been high enough to exceed their means, and so the land had yielded ill, the grass was uncut on many a meadow; Ray's draft had not been honored; Vivia had of course received no dividend from her Tennessee State-bonds, and her peach-orchards were only a place of forage. Still Vivia stayed at the cottage, not so much by fervent entreaty, or because she had no other place to go to, as because there were strange, strong ties binding her there for a while. Should all else fail, with the ripened wealth of her voice at command, her future was of course secure from want. But there was a drearier want at Vivia's door, which neither that nor any other wealth would ever meet.

Little Jane came up the field with a basket of the last

barberries lightly poised upon her head. A narrow wrinkle was beginning to divide the freckled fairness of her forehead. She kept it down with many an endeavor. Trying to eroon to herself as she passed, and stopping only to hang one of the searlet girandoles in Vivia's braids, she went in. The sunshine, loath to leave her pleasant little figure, followed after her, and played about her shadow on the floor.

Vivia still sat there and questioned the wide atmosphere, that, brooding palpitant between her and the lake, still withheld the desolating seeret that horizon must have whispered to horizon throughout the aching distance.

“O, that the bells in all these silent spires
Would elash their clangor on the sleeping air,
Ring their wild music out with throbbing choirs,
Ring peace in everywhere!”

she sang, and trembled as she sang. But there the burden broke, and rising, her eyes shaded by her hand, Vivia gazed down the lonely road where a stage-coach rolled along in a eloud of dust. What preseience, what instinct, it was that made her throw the shawl over her head, the shawl that Beltran liked to have her wear, and hasten down the field and away to lose herself in the wood, she alone could have told.

The slow minutes erept by, the coach had passed at length with loud wheel and resounding lash, its last dust was blowing after it, and it had left upon the door-stone a boy in army-blue, with his luggage beside him. A ghastly visage, a shrunken form, a erippled limb, were

what he brought home from the war. With his one foot upon the threshold, he paused, and turned the faee, gray under all its trace of weather, and furrowed, though so young, to meet the weleoming wind. He gazed upon the high sky out of which the sunshine waned, on the long champaign blending its gold and russet in one, on the melaneholy forest over which the twilight was stealing; he lifted his eap with a gesture as if he bade it all farewell, — then he grasped his eruteh and entered.

Without a word, Mrs. Vennard dropped the needles she was sorting upon the mat about her. Little Jane sprang forward, but checked herself in a strange awe.

“Let me go to bed, auntie,” said he, with a dry sob; “and I never want to get up again!”

Midnight was winding the world without in a white glimmer of misty moonlight, when the sharp beam of a taper smote Ray’s sleepless eyes, and he saw Vivia at last standing before him. Over her wrapper elung the old shawl whose snowy web was sown with broidery of linnæa-bells, green vine and rosy blossom. Round her shoulders fell her shadowy hair. Through her slender fingers the redness of the flame played, and on her eheck a heetie eoming and going like the broad beat and flush of an artery left it whiter than the speetral moonlight on the pane. She took away her hand, and let the illumination fall full upon his faee, — a face haggard as a dead man’s.

“Ray,” she said, “where is Beltran?”

Only silenee replied to her. He lay and stared up at her in a fixed and glassy glare. Breathless silenee.

Then Ray groaned, and turned his face to the wall. Vivian blew out the light.

The weeks crept away with the setting in of the frosts. Little Jane's heart was heavy for all the misery she saw about her, but she had no time to make moan. Ray's amputated ankle was giving fresh trouble, and after that was well over, he still kept his room, refusing food or fire, and staring with hot, wakeful eyes at the cold ceiling. Vivian lingered, subdued and pale, beside the hearth, doing any quiet piece of work that came to hand; no one had seen her shed tears, — she had shown no strenuous sorrow; on the night of Ray's return she had slept her first unbroken sleep for months; her nerves, stretched so intensely and so long, lay loosely now in their passionate reaction; some element more interior than they saved her from prostration. She stayed there, sad and still, no longer any sparkle or flush about her, but with a mildness so unlike the Vivian of June that it had in it something infinitely touching. She would have been glad to assist little Jane in her crowded duties, yet succeeded only in being a hindrance; and learning a little of broths and diet-drinks every day, she contented herself with sitting silent and dreamy, and transforming old linen garments into bandages. Mrs. Vennard, meanwhile, waited on her nephew and bewailed herself.

But for little Jane, — she had no time to bewail herself. She had all these people, in fact, on her hands, and that with very limited means to meet their necessities. It was true they need not experience actual want, — but there was her store to be managed so that it

should be at once wholesome and varied, and the first thing to do was to take an account of stock. The autumn's work had already been well done. She had carried berries enough to market to let her preserve her quinces and damsons in sirups clear as sunshine, and make her tiny allowance of currant and blackberry wines, where were innocently simulated the flavors of rare vintages. Crook-necked squashes decked the tall chimney-piece amid bunches of herbs and pearly strings of onions. She and Vivia had gathered the ripened apples themselves, and now goodly garlands of them hung from the attic-rafters, above the dried beans whose blossoms had so sweetened June, and above last year's corn-bus. That corn the first passing neighbor should take to mill and exchange a portion of for cracked wheat; and as the flour-barrel still held out, they would be tolerably well off for cereals, little Jane thought. They had kept only one cow, and Tommy Low would attend to her for the sake of his suppers, — suppers at which Vivia must forego her water-cresses now; but Janet had a bed of mushrooms growing down-cellar, that, broiled and buttered, were, she fancied, quite equal to venison-steaks. The hens, of course, must be sacrificed, all but a dozen of them; for, as there was no fresh meat for them in winter, they would not lay, and would be only a dead-weight, she said to herself, as, with her apron thrown over her neck, she stood watching them, finger on lip. However, that would give them poultry all through the holidays. Then there were the pigs to be killed on halves by a neighbor, as almost everything else outdoors had now to be done; and when that was accomplished, she found no time to

call her soul her own while making her sausage and bacon and souse and brawn. Part of the pork would produce salt fish, without which what farm-house would stand? — and with old hucklebones, her potatoes and parsnips, those ruby beets and golden carrots, there was many a Julien soup to be had. Jones's-root, bruised and boiled, made a chocolate as good as Spanish. Instead of ginger, there were the wild earaway-seeds growing round the house. If she could only contrive some sugar and some vanilla-beans, she would be well satisfied to open her campaign. But as there had been for weeks only one single copper cent and two postage-stamps in the house, that seemed an impossibility. Hereupon an idea seized little Jane, and for several days she was busy in a mysterious rummage. Garrets and closets surrendered their hoards to her; files of old newspapers, old ledgers, old letter-backs, began to accumulate in heaps, — everything but books, for Jane had a religious respect for their recondite lore; she cut the margins off the magazines, and she grew miserly of the very shreds ravelling under Vivian's fingers. At length, one morning, after she had watched the windows unweariedly as a cat watches a mouse-hole, she hurriedly exclaimed, —

“There he is!”

“Who?” asked Mrs. Vennard as hurriedly, with a dim idea that people in their State received visits from the sheriff.

“Our treasurer!” said little Jane.

And, indeed, the red cart crowned with yellow brooms and dazzling tin, the delight of housewives in lone places, was winding along the road; and in a few moments little

Jane accosted its driver, standing victorious in the midst of her bags and buudles and baskets.

"How much were white rags?"

"Twelve cents."

Lacouic, through the urgencies of tobacco.

"What?"

"Twelve cents."

"And colored?"

"Wal, they were consider'ble."

"And paper?"

"Six cents. 'T used to be half a cent. Six cents now."

"But the reasou?" breathlessly.

"Reckoned 't was the war's much as anything."

One good thing out of Nazareth! Little Jane saw herself on the road to riches, and immediately had thoughts of selling the whole household-equipment-for rags. She displayed her commodities.

"Did he pay in money?"

"Did n't like to; but then he did."

"Fiue day, to-day."

"Wal, 't was."

And when the reluctant tinman went on his way again, she returned to spread the fabulous result before her mother. There were sugars and spices and what not. And though — woe worth the day! — she found that the sum yielded only half what once it would, still, by drinking her own tea in its acritude, they would do admirably; for tea even little Jane required as her tonic, and without it felt like nothing but a mollusk.

All this was very well, so far as it went; but the thrifty housekeeper soon found that it went no way at

all. Those for whom she made her efforts wanted none of their results. She would have given all she had in the world to help these suffering beings; but her little cooking and concocting were all that she could do, and those they disregarded utterly. When in the dull forenoon she would have enlivened Vivia with her precious elderberry-wine, that a connoisseur must taste twice before telling from purplest port, and Vivia only wet her lips at it, or when she carried Ray a roasted apple, its burnished sides bursting with juice and clotted with cream, and the boy glanced at it and never saw it, little Jane felt ready to cry; and she set to bethinking herself seriously if there were nothing else to be done.

One day, it was the day before Christmas, Jane took up to Ray's room one of her trifles, a whip, whose *suave* and frothy nothingness was piled over the sweet plum-pulp at bottom. Ray lay on the outside of the bed, with his thick poncho over him; he looked at her and at her tray, played with the teaspoon a moment, then rolled upon his side and shut his eyes. Little Jane took a half-dozen steps about the room, reached the door, hesitated, and came back.

"Ray," said she, under her breath and with tears in her voice, "I wish you wouldn't do so. You don't know how it makes me feel. I can't do anything for you but bring whips and custards; and you won't touch those."

Ray turned and looked up at her.

"Do you care, Janet?" said he; and, rising on one arm, he lifted the glass, and finished its delicate sweetmeat with a gust.

But as he threw himself back, little Jane took heart of grace once more.

"Ray, dear," said she, "I don't think it's right for you to stay here alone in the cold. Won't you come down where it's warm? It's so much more cheerful by the fire."

"I don't want to be cheerful," said Ray.

Janet looked at the door, then summoned her forees, and, holding the high bedpost with both hands, said, —

"Ray, if God sent you any trouble, he never meant for you to take it so. You are repulsing him every day. You are straightening yourself against him. You are like a log on his hands. Can't you bend beneath it? Dear Ray, you need comfort, but you never will find it till you take up your life and your duties again and come down among us."

"What duties have I?" said Ray, hoarsely, looking along his footless limb. "The sooner my life ends, O, the better! I want no comfort!"

But little Jane had gone.

Christmas day dawned clear and keen; the sky was full of its bluest sparkle, and, wheresoever it mounted and stretched over snowy fields, seemed to hold nothing but gladness. Vivia had wrapped herself in her cloak, and walked two miles to an early church-service, so if by any accord of worship she might put her heart in tune with the universe. She had been at home a half-hour already, and sat in her old nook with some idle work between her fingers. A broad blaze rolled its rosy volumes up the chimney, and threw its reflections on the shining shelves and into the great tin-kitchen, that, planted firmly,

held up to the heat the very bird that had moved so majestically over the spring meadow, and which Mrs. Vennard was at present basting with such assiduity, that, if ever the knife should penetrate the crisp depth of envelope, it would certainly find the enclosure unscathed by fire. Little Jane was stirring enormous raisins into some wonderful batter of a pudding, — for she remembered the time when somebody used to pick out all his plums and leave the rest, and she meant that, so far as her skill and her resources would go, there should be no abatement of Christmas cheer to-day. And if, after all, everybody disdained the bounteous affair, why, it could go to Tommy Low's mother, who would not by any means disdain it. Every now and then she turned an anxious ear for any movement in the cold distance, — but there was only silence.

Suddenly Vivia started. A door had swung to, a strange sharp sound echoed on the staircase, the kitchen-door opened and closed, and Ray set his back against it. He did not attempt to move, but stood there darkly surveying them. Vivia looked at him a second, then rose quickly, crossed the room, and kissed him. Immediately Mrs. Vennard made a commotion, while the other led him forward and placed him in her chair. Little Jane pushed aside the pudding hastily, and proceeded to mull some of her mock sherry, that his heart might be warmed within him; and the cat came rubbing against his crutch, as if she would make friends with it and take it into the family. Mrs. Vennard resumed her basting; Vivia began talking to him about her work and about her walk, murmuring pleasantly in her clear, low tone, — Janet now and then

putting in a word. Ray sat there, sipping his spiey draught, and looking out with an unacquainted air at the stir to which his coming had lent some gladness. But his face was yet overcast with the shadows of the grave. In vain Mrs. Vennard fussed and fidgeted, in vain little Jane uttered any of her brisk, but sorry jesting, in vain Vivia's gentle voice; — it all touched Ray's heart no other way than as the rain slips along a tombstone. Vivia folded her work and disappeared; she was going to light a fire in her parlor, where there had been none yet, and where by and by in the evening shadows she might play to Ray, and charm him, perhaps, to rest. Mrs. Vennard divined her purpose, and hurried after her to join in the task. Ray found himself alone in his corner; he shivered. In spite of all the weeks of solitude, a sudden chill seized him; he gathered up his crutches, and stalked on them to the table where little Jane was yet finding something to do. She brought him a chair, and for a minute or two he watched her; then he was only staring vacantly at his hands, as they lay before him on the table.

If Janet was a busy soul, she was just as certainly a busybody. She had the loving and innocent habit of making herself a member of every one's equation. Just now she ached inwardly, when looking at Ray, and it was impossible for her not to try and help him.

"Ray, dear," said she, leaving her work and standing before him, "I think you ought to smile now. Vivia has forgiven you. Take it as an earnest that God forgives you, too."

"I have n't sinned against God," said Ray. "I don't know who I sinned against. I killed my brother."

And his face fell forward on his hands and wet them with jets of scalding tears. Full of awe and misery, little Jane dropped upon her knees beside him, and, clasping his hands in hers, said to herself some silent prayer.

After that placid-ending Christmas, after that first prayer, those first tears, after Vivia's music at nightfall, Ray was another creature. He no longer shut himself up in his room, but was down and about with little Jane at peep of day. Indeed, he had now a horror of being alone, following Janet from morn till eve, like a shadow, and stooping forward, when the dark began to gather, with great, silent tears rolling over his face, unless she came and took the cricket at his foot, slipping her warm hand into his, and helping him to himself with the unspoken sympathy. But it was a horror which nothing wholly lulled to sleep at last but Vivia's singing. Every night, for an hour or more, Vivia wrought the music's spell about him, while he lay back in his chair, and little Jane retreated across the hearth, not daring to intrude on such a season. They were seldom purely sad things that she played: sometimes the melody murmured its *cantabile* like a summer brook into which moonbeams bent, flowing along the lowland, breaking only in sprays of tune, and seeming to paint in its bosom the sleeping shadows of the fair field-flowers; and if ever the gentle strain lost its way, and found itself wandering among the massive chords, the profound melancholy, the blind groping of any Fifth Symphony or piercing Stabat Mater, she answered it, singing Elijah's hymn of rest; and as she sang, there

grew in her voice a strength, a sweetness, that satisfied the very soul. When the uiuc-o'elock bell rang in from the village through the winter night's crystal clearness, little Jane would lightly nudge her mother and steal away to bed; and in the ruddy twilight of the falling fire the two talked softly, talked, — but never of that dark thing lying most deeply in the heart of either. Perhaps, by and by, when the thrilling wound should be only a scar, if ever that time should come, the one would be able to speak, the other to hear.

Week after week, now, Ray began to occupy himself about the house more and more, resuming in suecession odd little jobs that during all this time had remained unfinished as on the day he went. He seemed desirous of taking up the days exactly as he had left them, of bridging over this gap and chasm, of ignoring the fatal summer. Something so dreadful had fallen into his life that it could not assimilate itself with the tissues of daily existence. The work must be slow that would volatilize such a black body of horror till it leavened all the being into power and grace undreamed of before. But little Jaue did not philosophize upon what she was so glad to see; she hailed every sign of outside interest as a symptom of returning health, and gave him a thousand occasions. Yesterday there were baskets to braid, and to-day he must initiate her in the complications of a dozen difficult sailor's-knots that he knew, and to-morrow there would be woodelhuck-traps to make and show her how to set. For Janet's chief vexation had overtaken her in the absence of fresh eggs for breakfast, an absence that would be enduring, unless

the small game of the forest could be lured into her snares and parcelled among the apathetic hens. Many were the recipes and the consultations on the subject, till at last Ray wrote out for her, in black-letter, a notice to be pinned up in the sight of every delinquent: "Twelve eggs, or death!" Whether it were the frozen rabbit-meat flung among them the day before, or whether it were the timely warning, there is no one to tell; but the next morning twelve eggs lay in the various hiding-places, which Mrs. Vennard declared to be as good eggs as ever were laid, and custards and cookies renewed their reign. Here, suddenly, Ray remembered the purse in his haversack, containing all his uncounted pay. It was a weary while that he stayed alone in the cold, leaning over it as if he stared at the thirty pieces of silver, a faint sickness seized him, then hurriedly sweeping it up, with a red spot burning cruelly into either cheek, he brought it down, and emptied it in little Jane's lap, though he would rather have seen it ground to impalpable dust. But, after a moment's thought, the astonished recipient kept it for a use of her own. Finally, one night, Ray proposed to instruct Janet in some particular branch of his general ignorance; and after those firelight-recitations, little Jane forgot to move her seat away, and her hand was kept in his through all the hour of Vivia's slow enchantment.

So the cold weather wore away, and spring stole into the scene like a surprise, finding Vivia as the winter found her, — but Ray still undergoing volcanic changes, now passionless lulls and now rages and spasms of grief; gradually out of them all he gathered his strength about him.

It was once more a morning of early June, sunrise was blushing over the meadows, and the gossamers of hoar dew lay in spidery veils of woven light and melted under the rosy beams. From her window one heard Vivian singing, and the strain stole down like the breath of the heavy honeysuckles that trellised her pane : —

“No more for me the eager day
Breaks its bright prison-bars :
The sunshine Thou hast stripped away,
But bared the eternal stars.

“Though in the cloud the wild bird sings,
His song falls not for me,
Alone while rosy heaven rings, —
But, Lord, alone with Thee ! ”

One well could know, in listening to the liquid melody of those clear tones, that love and sorrow had transfused her life at last to woof and warp of innermost joy that death itself could neither tarnish nor obscure. In a few moments she came down and joined Ray, where he stood upon the door-stone, with one arm resting over the shoulder of little Jane, and watched with him the antics of a youth who postured before them. It was some old acquaintance of Ray's, returned from the war; and as if he would demonstrate how wonderfully martial exercise supple joint and sinew, he was leaping in the air, turning his heel where his toe should be, hanging his foot on his arm and throwing it over his shoulder in a necklace, skipping and prancing on the grass like a veritable saltinbanco. Ray looked grimly on and inspected

the evolutions ; then there was long process of question and answer and asseveration, and, when the youth departed, little Jane had announced with authority that Ray should throw away his crutch and stand on two feet of his own again.

“What a gay fellow he is!” said Ray, drawing a breath of relief. “They’re all alike, dancing on graves. To be an old *Téméraire*, decked out in signal-flags after thunderous work well done, and settling down, is one thing. But we — to-day, when one would think every woman in the land should wear the sackcloth and ashes of mourning, we break into a splendor of apparel that defies the butterflies and boughs of the dying year.”

“Two striking examples before you,” said little Jane, with a laugh, as she looked at her old print and at Vivia’s gray gown.

“I was n’t thinking of you. I saw the ladies in the village yesterday, — they were pied and parded.”

“Children,” said Mrs. Vennard from within, “I’ve taken up the coffee now. I sha’ n’t wait a minute longer. Vivia, I’ll beat an egg into yours.”

But the children had wandered down to the lake-shore, oblivious of her cry, and were standing on the rock watching their images glassed below and ever freshly shattered with rippling undulations. A wherry chained beside them Vivia rocked lightly with her foot.

“You and little Jane will set me down by and by?” she asked. “’T will be so much pleasanter than the coach.”

“And, Vivia dear, you will go, then?” exclaimed little Jane, with tearful eyes. “You will certainly go?”

"Yes," said Vivia, looking out and far away, "I shall go to do that—"

"Which no one can ever do for *you*," said Ray, with a shudder.

"Which some woman will praise Heaven for."

"God bless you, Vivia!" cried little Jane.

"He has already blessed me," said Vivia, softly.

Janet nestled nearer to Ray's side, as they stood. There was a tremor of gladness through all the dew of her glance. Ray looked down at her for a moment, and his hard brow softened, in his eyes hung a light like the reflection of a star in a breaking wave.

"He has blessed me, too," said he. "Some day I shall be a man again. I have thrown away my crutch, Vivia,—for all my life I am going to have this little shoulder to lean upon."

And over his sombre face a smile crept and deepened, like the yellow ray that, after a long, dark day of driving rain, suddenly gilds the tree-tops and brims the sky; and though, when it went, the gloom shut drearily down again, still it bore the promise of fair day to-morrow.





THREE NOVEMBER DAYS.

BY BENJAMIN F. TAYLOR.

THE smiting of the enemy's crescent front at Mission Ridge on the twenty-third of November, 1863, the capture of Lookout Mountain on the twenty-fourth, and the storming of Mission Ridge on the twenty-fifth were the three acts of one splendid drama.

THE SMITING OF THE SHIELD.

MONDAY — TWENTY-THIRD.

It was apparent that the enemy apprehended coming danger, for on Sunday morning two divisions moved northward along Mission Ridge and took position on his extreme right. All that beautiful Sunday the Rebel lines were restless; trains were moving, brigades passing and repassing, like the sliding pictures in a camera obscura; there was "a fearful looking for" of coming judgment. All that beautiful Sunday there was anxious expectation in Chattanooga; field-glasses were everywhere sweeping the mountains; I walked through the

eamps, and the boys were a shade less merry than is their wont; the hush of the coming storm was in the air. And so the Sabbath wore away. Then Federal signals flashed from hill to hill along the west, like "the writing on the wall," and through the dusk Howard's column moved like deeper shadows across the town. All night long I heard the tramp of the men and the hollow rumbling of artillery, and as the moon came up, the sentinels looked down upon it all, like sentries from a tower. Deserters, both officers and men, came into our picket-lines that night; the enemy was astir; rations had been issued; baggage sent to the rear; they were making ready for business. Monday, cloudy and dull, dragged through its morning.

Let me show you a landscape that shall not fade out from "the lidless eye of time" long after we are all dead. A half-mile from the eastern border of Chattanooga is a long swell of land sparsely sprinkled with houses, flecked thickly with tents, and checkered with two or three graveyards. On its summit stand the red earthworks of Fort Wood, with its great guns frowning from the angles. Mounting the parapet and facing eastward you have a singular panorama. Away to your left is a shining elbow of the Tennessee, a lowland of woods, a long-drawn valley, glimpses of houses. At your right you have wooded undulations with clear intervals extending down and around to the valley at the eastern base of Lookout. From the Fort the smooth ground descends rapidly to a little plain, a sort of trough in the sea, then a fringe of oak woods, then an acclivity, sinking down to a second fringe of woods, until full in front

of you, and three fourths of a mile distant, rises Orchard Knob, a conical mound, perhaps a hundred feet high, once wooded, but now bald. Then ledges of rocks and narrow breadths of timber, and rolling sweeps of open ground, for two miles more, until the whole rough and stormy landscape seems to dash against Mission Ridge, three miles distant, that lifts like a sea-wall eight hundred feet high, wooded, rocky, precipitous, wrinkled with ravines. This is, in truth, the grand feature of the scene, for it extends north as far as you can see, with fields here and there cut down through the woods to the ground, and lying on the hillsides like brown linen to bleach; and you feel, as you look at them, as if they are in danger of slipping down the Ridge into the road at its base. And then it curves to the southwest, just leaving you a way out between it and Lookout Mountain. Altogether the rough, furrowed landscape looks as if the Titans had ploughed and forgotten to harrow it. The thinly fringed summit of the Ridge varies in width from twenty to fifty feet, and houses looking like cigar-boxes are dotted along it. On the top of that wall are Rebels and batteries; below the first pitch, three hundred feet down, are more Rebels and batteries, and still below are their camps and rifle-pits, sweeping five miles. At your right, and in the rear, is Fort Negley, the old "Star" fort of Confederate *régime*; its next neighbor is Fort King, under the frown of Lookout; yet to the right is the battery of Moccasin Point. Finish out the picture on either hand with Federal earthworks and sauey angles, fancy the embankment of the Charleston and Memphis Railroad drawn diagonally, like an awk-

ward score, across the plain far at your feet, and I think you have the tremendous theatre, and now what next if not, in Hamlet's words, "the play 's the thing!"

The Federal forces lay along the ridgy slope to the right and left of Fort Wood; the enemy's advance held Orchard Knob in force, and their breastworks and rifle-pits seamed the landscape. At half past twelve o'clock Major-General Granger received an order to make a reconnoissance in force towards the base of Mission Ridge, and feel the enemy, supposed to be massing in our immediate front and on Lookout Mountain. It was a strange scene. There was to be no more use for the two lines of pickets that for so many days and nights had stood in friendly neighborhood, exchanged the jest and the daily news, and sat at each other's fires. Ours were to be recalled; theirs were to be thrust back, and the thin veneering of battle's double front rudely torn away. At half past twelve the order came; at one, two divisions of the Fourth Corps made ready to move; at ten minutes before two, twenty-five thousand Federal troops were in line of battle. The line of skirmishers moved lightly out, and swept true as a sword-blade into the edge of the field. You should have seen that splendid line, two miles long, as straight and unwavering as a ray of light. On they went, driving in the pickets before them; shots of musketry, like the first great drops of summer rain upon a roof, pattered along the line. One fell here, another there, but still, like joyous heralds before a royal progress, the skirmishers passed on. From wood and rifle-pit, from rocky ledge and mountain-top, sixty-five thousand Rebels watched these

couriers bearing the gift of battle in their hands. The bugle sounded from Fort Wood, and the divisions of Wood and Sheridau began to move; the latter, out from the right, threatened a heavy attack; the former, forth from the left, dashed on into the rough road of the battle. Black rifle-pits were tipped with fire; sheets of flame flashed out of the woods; the spatter of musketry deepened into volleys and rolled like muffled drums; hostile batteries opened from the ledges; the "Rodmans" joined in from Fort Wood; bursting shell and gusts of shrapnel filled the air; the echoes roused up and growled back from the mountains, the rattle was a roar, and yet those gallant fellows moved steadily on; down the slope, through the wood, up the hills, straight for Orchard Knob as the crow flies, moved that glorious wall of blue.

The air grew dense and blue; the gray elonds of smoke surged up the sides of the valley. It was a terrible journey they were making, those men of ours; and three fourths of a mile in sixty minutes was splendid progress. They neared the Knob; the enemy's fire converged; the arc of batteries poured in upon them lines of fire, like the rays they call a "glory" about the head of Madonna and the Child, but they went up the rugged altar of Orchard Knob at the double-quick with a cheer; they wrapped, like a cloak, round an Alabama regiment that defended it, and swept them down on our side of the mound. Prisoners had begun to come in before; they streamed across the field like files of geese. Then on for a second altar, Brush Knob, — nearly a half-mile to the northeast, — and bristling with a battery; it was

swept of foes and garnished with Federal blue in thirty minutes.

The Third Division of the Fourth Corps had made a splendid march; they had bent our line outward to the enemy like Apollo's bow, and so Howard at Wood's right, and Sheridan at his left, swung out to cut new swaths and leave the edges even, as we went right through this harvest-field of splendid valor and heroic death. At four o'clock Granger's headquarters were on Orchard Knob, and the cruel storm beat on. On the left, fronting the section of the Eleventh Corps led by General Schurz, was a range of rifle-pits whence the stubborn enemy were not driven, and the general, whose quick eye nothing on that broad field escaped, ordered two brisk twelve-pound Parrotts of Bridges's Battery, planted upon Orchard Knob, to give them an enfilading fire where, on his left, the ends of their rifle-pits showed in the edge of the wood like the mouth of a wolf's burrow. You should have seen that motley crew climb out as the splendid fire swept through, and scurry out of sight. It was their ditch, indeed, but they were not quite ready to die in it. The left of the Federal line not advancing to occupy the work, its old tenants crept back one by one, and lay snug as ever. Thrice did Granger sweep the rifle-pits, and General Beattie was ordered round with three regiments to reinforce the left, and the line came squarely up.

At four o'clock the gallant Hazen, at the head of his brigade, charged the rifle-pits at the right of Orchard Knob, up the hill, carried them at the point of the bayonet, and swooped up three hundred prisoners. Here

Major Buck of the 93d Ohio fell mortally wounded, and the 93d and 124th Ohio lost thirty killed and one hundred wounded. While the terrible play was going on here, there was neither silence nor inactivity there. Moccasin Point thundered at the camps in the valley at the south, and Lookout growled at the Point, Fort King uttered a word on its own account, and Wood laid its shells about where it pleased, their little rolls of smoke lying on the Ridge like fleecy wool.

If you have glance or thought for anything but the grand action of the drama, you can see the signals fluttering like white wings from Fort Wood, from away to the left of the line, from the brow of Orchard Knob, from the left of Raccoon Range across the town. On the summit of Mission Ridge, a little to the southeast of Fort Wood, is a cluster of buildings; a glass will bring them so near that you can discern the gray horse ready saddled at the door. You are looking upon the headquarters of Braxton Bragg. All these hours he has been watching the impetuous surge of Federal gallantry that swept his smoky legions out of their rifle-pits, off from their vantage-ground, over the swells, through the selva of woods, into their rifle-pits and behind their defences.

Listening with his heart to all the tumult of that terrible afternoon, no man can tell how three little figures can truthfully express the Federal loss, but he must believe and be glad when I tell him that "420" are those figures. The enemy must keep counting on to seven hundred before his bloody roll is called.

Of the heroic coolness of our army, how can I say

enough? Moving against thirty thousand men, possessing every advantage of position, defences, numbers engaged, — everything, indeed, but having chosen a day of battle, — all men will take up the words of General Howard, and pass them round the land: “I knew that Western men would fight well, but I did *not* know that they went into battle and stormed strong works like men on dress parade!”

The battle ends with the ended day, the commanding general is in the centre of his new front far out in the field; the pickets assume their old proximity in a new neighborhood; no musket-shot startles the silence, and behind the fresh breastworks that have carried the heavy labors of soul and sinew far on into the night, the Federal forces sleep upon their arms; to dream, perchance, of fierce assault and sweeping triumph; to wake, perhaps, to a half-reluctant sense of another heavy day of struggle and of blood, for the threshold of approach is only swept, and there before them waits the enemy.

THE CAPTURE OF LOOKOUT MOUNTAIN.

TUESDAY—TWENTY-FOURTH.

I am looking down upon three boys that lie side by side on the ground. Three bits of twine bind those willing feet of theirs, that shall never again move at “the double-quick” to the charge. They were among the heroes of Lookout Mountain. They were killed yesterday. And to-day, — let me think what *is* to-day. Away there at the North, there were song and sermon;

and the old family table, that had been drooping in the corner, spread its wide wings; and the children came flocking home "like doves to their windows"; and the threshold made music to their feet, — alas, for the three pairs beside me! — and the welcome went round the bright hearth. It is THANKSGIVING to-day! Let the mothers give thanks, if they can, for the far-away feet that grew beautiful as they hastened to duty and halted in death. Even while the heart of the loyal land was lifted in a psalm for the blessings it had numbered, *another* was winging its way northward, — the tidings of triumph from the mountains of the Cumberland!

Tuesday broke cold and cheerless; it was a Scottish morning, and the air was dim with mist. I crossed the ground over which our boys had marched so grandly on Monday afternoon, down into the valley of death and glory, where they had lain all night in line of battle. Brave hearts! They were ready and eager for a second day's journey; they had put their hands to the burning ploughshare, and there was no thought of looking back. Beyond them lay the hostile camps, and Mission Ridge with its three furrows of rifle-pits, and the enemy swarming like gray ants on the hills. You would have wondered, as I did, at the formidable line of defence the boys had thrown up when they came to a halt, and the terrible music they marched to had died out with the day. Rocks and logs had been piled in great wind-rows, filled in with earth, and could have withstood a stout assault.

Our wicked little battery on Orchard Knob had "ceased from troubling"; Fort Wood was dumb, and

not a voice from the "Parrott" perches anywhere. Stray ambulances — those flying hospitals — were making their way back to the town, and soldiers were digging graves on the hillsides. Interrogation points glittered in men's eyes as they turned an ear to the northeast and listened for Sherman. By and by a little fleet of soldier-laden pontoon boats came drifting down the river, and I hastened to meet them as they landed. The boys in high feather tumbled out, the inevitable coffee-kettle swinging from their bayonets. If a Federal soldier should be fellow-traveller with Bunyan's Pilgrim, I almost believe that tin kettle of his would be heard tinkling after him to the very threshold of the "Gate Beautiful." "Well, boys — what now?" "We've put down the pontoon — taken nineteen Rebel pickets without firing a gun — run the Rebel blockade — drawn a shot — nobody hurt — Sherman's column is half over — bully for Sherman!" Those fellows had been thirty hours without rest, and were as fresh-hearted and dashing as so many thoroughbreds. They had wrought all night long with their lives in their hands, and not a trace of hardship or a breath of complaining. The heavy drudgery of army life, without which campaigns could never bear the red blossom of battle, seldom, I fancy, elicits the thanks of commanding generals.

Perhaps it was eleven o'clock on Tuesday morning, when the rumble of artillery came in gusts from the valley to the west of Lookout. Climbing Signal Hill, I could see volumes of smoke rolling to and fro, like clouds from a boiling caldron. The mad surges of

tumult lashed the hill till they cried aloud, and roared through the gorges till you might have fancied all the thunders of a long summer tumbled into that valley together. And yet the battle was unseen. It was like hearing voices from the under-world. Meanwhile it began to rain; skirts of mist trailed over the woods and swept down the ravines, but our men trusted in Providence, kept their powder dry, and played on. It was the second day of the drama; it was the second act I was hearing; it was the touch on the enemy's left. The assault upon Lookout had begun! Glancing at the mighty crest crowned with a precipice, and now hung round about, three hundred feet down, with a curtain of clouds, my heart misgave me. It could never be taken.

But let me step aside just here from the simple story of what I saw, to detail, as concisely as I can, Hooker's admirable design. His force consisted of two brigades of the Fourth Corps, under the command of General Cruft, General Whittaker's and Colonel Grose's; the First Division of the Twelfth Corps under General Geary, and Osterhaus in reserve. It was a formidable business they had in hand: to carry a mountain and scale a precipice near two thousand feet high, in the teeth of a battery and the face of two intrenched brigades. Hooker ordered Cruft to move directly south along the western base of the mountain, while he would remain in the valley close under Lookout, and make a grand demonstration with small-arms and artillery. The enemy, roused out by all this "sound and fury," were to come forth from their camps and works, high up the

western side of the mountain, and descend to dispute Hooker's noisy passage; Cruft, when the roar behind him deepened into "confusion worse confounded," was to turn upon his heel, move obliquely up the mountain upon the enemy's camps, in the enemy's rear, wheel round the monster, and up to the white house I have already described, and take care of himself while he took Lookout.

Hooker thundered and the enemy came down like the Assyrian, while Whittaker on the right, and Colonel Ireland of Geary's command on the left, having moved out from Wauhatchie, some five miles from the mountain, at five in the morning, pushed up to Chattanooga Creek, threw over it a bridge, made for Lookout Point, and there formed the right under the shelf of the mountain, the left resting on the creek. And then the play began; the enemy's camps were seized, his pickets surprised and captured, the strong works on the Point taken, and the Federal front moved on. Charging upon him, they leaped over his works as the wicked twin Roman leaped over his brother's mud-wall, the 40th Ohio capturing his artillery and taking a Mississippi regiment, and gained the white house. And there they stood, 'twixt heaven and — Chattanooga. But above them, grand and sullen, lifted the precipice; and they were men, and not eagles. The way was strown with natural fortifications, and from behind rocks and trees they delivered their fire, contesting inch by inch the upward way. The sound of the battle rose and fell; now fiercely renewed, and now dying away. And Hooker thundered on in the valley, and the echoes of his howit-

zers bounded about the mountains like volleys of musketry. That curtain of cloud was hung around the mountain by the God of battles, — even our God. It was the veil of the temple that could not be rent. A captured colonel declared that had the day been clear, their sharpshooters would have riddled our advance like pigeons, and left the command without a leader; but friend and foe were wrapped in a seamless mantle, and two hundred will cover the entire Federal loss, while our brave mountaineers strewed Lookout with four hundred dead, and captured a thousand prisoners.

Our entire forces bore themselves bravely; not a straggler in the command, they all came splendidly up to the work, and the whole affair was graced with signal instances of personal valor. Lieutenant Smith, of the 40th Ohio, leaped over the works, discharged his revolver six times like the ticking of a clock, seized a sturdy foe by the hair, and gave him the heel of the “Colt” over the head. Colonel Ireland was slightly wounded, and Major Acton, of the 40th Ohio, was shot through the heart while leading a bayonet charge.

And now, returning to my point of observation, I was waiting in painful suspense to see what should come out of the roaring caldron in the valley, now and then, I confess, casting an eye up to the big gun of Lookout, lest it might toss something my way, over its left shoulder, — I, a non-combatant, and bearing no arms but a Faber’s pencil, “Number 2,” when something was *born* out of the mist, — I cannot better convey the idea, — and appeared on the shorn side of the mountain, below and to the west of the white house. It was the head of the

Federal column! And there it held, as if it were riveted to the rock, and the line of blue, a half-mile long, swung slowly around from the left like the index of a mighty dial, and swept up the brown face of the mountain. The bugles of this city of camps were sounding high noon, when in two parallel columns the troops moved up the mountain, in the rear of the enemy's rifle-pits, which they swept at every fire. Ah, I wish you had been here. It needed no glass to see it; it was only just beyond your hand. And there, in the centre of the columns, fluttered the blessed flag. "My God! what flag is that?" men cried. And up steadily it moved. I could think of nothing but a gallant ship-of-the-line grandly lifting upon the great billows and riding out the storm. It was a scene never to fade out. Pride and pain struggled in my heart for the mastery, but faith carried the day; I believed in the flag and took courage. Volleys of musketry and crashes of cannon, and then those lulls in a battle even more terrible than the tempest. At four o'clock an aid came straight down the mountain into the city; the first Federal by that route in many a day. Their ammunition ran low, — they wanted powder upon the mountain! He had been two hours descending, and how much longer the return!

Night was closing rapidly in, and the scene was growing sublime. The battery at Moccasin Point was sweeping the road to the mountain. The brave little fort at its left was playing like a heart in a fever. The cannon upon the top of Lookout were pounding away at their lowest depression. The flash of the guns fairly *burned* through the clouds; there was an instant of silence, here,

there, yonder, and the tardy thunder leaped out after the swift light. For the first time, perhaps, since that mountain began to buru beneath the gold and crimson sandals of the sun, it was in eclipse. The cloud of the summit and the smoke of the battle had met half-way and mingled. Here was Chattanooga, but Lookout had vanished! It was Siuai over again with its thunderings and lightnings and thick darkness, and the Lord was on our side. Then the storm ceased, and occasional dropping shots told off the evening till half past nine, and then a crashing volley and a Rebel yell and a desperate charge. It was their good-night to our boys; good-night to the mountain. They had been met on their own vantage-ground; they had been driven one and a half miles. The Federal foot touched the hill, indeed, but above still towered the precipice.

At ten o'clock a growing line of lights glittered obliquely across the breast of Lookout. It made our eyes dim to see it. It was the Federal autograph scored along the mountain. They were our camp-fires. Our wounded lay there all the dreary night of rain, unrepining and content. Our unharmed heroes lay there upon their arms. Our dead lay there, "and surely they slept well." At dawn Captain Wilson and fifteen men of the 8th Kentucky crept up among the rocky clefts, handing their guns one to another, — "like them that gather sapphire, — dreadful trade!" — and stood at length upon the summit. The entire regiment pushed up after them, formed in line, threw out skirmishers, and advanced five miles to Summertown. Artillery and infantry had all fled in the night, nor left a wreck behind. The plan was

opening as beautifully as a flower. General Sherman's apprehended approach upon the other extremity of the line had set the enemy's front all dressing to the right. Hardee, of "Taetie's" memory, who had been upon the mountain, moved round the line on Sunday, leaving two brigades and the attraction of gravitation—to wit, the preeipice—to hold the left, yet further depleted by the splendid march already made upon the enemy's centre. Then God let down a fold of his pavilion, our men were heroes, and the work was done. The capture afforded inexpressible relief to the army. There the enemy had looked down defiant, sentries pacing our very walls. Every angle of a Federal work, every gun, every new disposition of a regiment, was as legible as a page of an open book. You can never quite know how beautiful was that cordon of lights flung like a royal order across the breast of the mountain.

One thing more, and all I shall try to give you of the stirring story will have been told. Just as the sun was touching up the old Department of the Cumberland, that Captain Wilson and his fifteen men, near where the gun had erouched and growled at all the land, waved the regimental flag, in sight of Tennessee, Alabama, Georgia, the old North State, and South Carolina,—waved it there, and the right of the Federal front, lying far beneath, caught a glimpse of its flutter, and a cheer rose to the top of the mountain, and ran from regiment to regiment through whole brigades and broad divisions, till the boys away round in the face of Mission Ridge passed it along the line of battle. "The sight of the gridiron did my soul good," said General Meigs. "What

is it? Our flag? Did I help put it there?" murmured a poor wounded fellow, and died without the sight.

THE STORMING OF MISSION RIDGE.

WEDNESDAY—TWENTY-FIFTH.

THE stars and stripes floated from Lookout on Wednesday at sunrise. At twelve on that day, something with the cry of a loon was making its way up the river. Screaming through the mountains, it emerged at last into Chattanooga, and its looks were a match for its lungs, — an ugly little craft more like a backwoods cabin adrift than a steamer, it was the sweetest-voiced and prettiest piece of naval architecture that ever floated upon the Tennessee. The flag on the crest and the boat on the stream were parts of the same story: first, the fight on the mountain; then, the boat on the river. Never did result crowd more closely on the heels of action. When the thunder began to roll around Lookout, the boys in line before Mission Ridge cried out: "Old Hooker is opening the cracker line!" And when the next noon they heard the shriek of the steamer, they laughingly said, "The cracker line is opened!" and went straight into the fight with a will. They have a direct way of "putting things" in the army.

I do not think that, going about Chattanooga, last Wednesday morning, you would have discerned an impending battle. The current of regular business was not checked; the play of men's little passions was as lively as ever. Jest and laughter eddied round the street

corners, and pepper-and-salt groups of children frolicked in sunny places. But there *were* signs of heavy weather. The doors of the ordnance depots swung open, the sentinels stood aside, and ammunition was passing out. You could see "canvas-backed" wagons working their way out of town to the eastward, apparently but little in them, and yet laboring beneath their freight. Grape and canister and shot and shell make heavy loads as well as heavy hearts. A building here and there is cleared and strangely furnished with long rows of pallets. Ambulances set forth, one after another; they are all going one way; they are bound for the valley of Mission Ridge. And if all this should fail to set you thinking, yet there are things that may, perhaps, disturb the steady stroke of an easy-going heart. Sitting with me, last Tuesday night, you would have heard such talk as this. A chief-of-staff is speaking: "Jemmy, here is a package of money I'll leave with you till I come back." "Lend me your watch," said a dashing young major to a comrade, "and here's a hundred dollars if I should forget to return it to-morrow night, you know." And the officer swallowed a little memory of something and went out. You part the folds of tent after tent; writing letters here, burning letters there, getting ready for the longest of all journeys that yet can be made in a minute. "Well," said an officer that night, "I shall be in the hottest place in the field to-morrow, but do you know? — the bullet is not run that will kill me." And the gallant fellow dropped off into a childlike sleep, while I lay awake and was troubled. And he told the truth — the bullet was *not* moulded — for a little after four the next

afternoon, a bursting shell carried away the "pound of flesh" that Shylock craved, and again he fell asleep, in the arms of the All-Father. Good night !

If seeing for one's self is an art, seeing for another is a mystery, requiring, I mistrust, a better pair of eyes than mine. But if my readers will accept a straightforward, simple story of what one man saw of Wednesday's work, as bare of embellishment as the bayonets that glittered to the charge, here it is. You are standing again on Orehard Knob, the centre of our line of advance; Mission Ridge is before; Fort Wood behind; the shining elbow of the Tennessee to the left; Lookout to the right. Never was theatre more magnificent. Never was drama worthier of such surroundings.

The same grand heroic line of battle, but a little longer and stronger, silently stretches away on either hand. Breaking it up into syllables and reading from left to right, you have Howard's Eleventh Corps; Baird's division of the Fourteenth Corps, with the brigades of Turchin, Vandever, and Croxton; Wood's division of the Fourth Corps, with the brigades of Beattie, Willieh, and Hazen; Sheridan's division, with the brigades of Wagner, Sherman, and Harker; King's brigade of regulars, and Johnson's division of the Fourteenth Corps. And then, at the tips of the wings, on farthest left and right, are Sherman and Hooker.

Imagine a chain of Federal forts, built in between with walls of living men, the line flung northward out of sight, and southward beyond Lookout. Imagine a chain of mountains crowned with batteries and manned with hostile troops through a six-mile sweep, set over against

us in plain sight, and you have the two fronts, — the blue, the gray. Imagine the centre of our line pushed out a mile and a half towards Mission Ridge, — the boss, a full mile broad, of a mighty shield, — and you have the situation as it was on Wednesday morning, at sunrise.

The iron heart of Sherman's column began to be audible, like the fall of great trees in the depth of the forest, as it beat beyond the woods on the extreme left. Over roads indescribable, and conquering lions of difficulties that met him all the way, he had at length arrived with his command of the Army of the Tennessee. The roar of his guns was like the striking of a great clock, and grew nearer and louder, as the morning wore away. Along the centre all was still. Our men lay, as they had lain since Tuesday night, motionless behind the works. Generals Grant, Thomas, Granger, Meigs, Hunter, Reynolds, were grouped at Orchard Knob, here; Bragg, Breckinridge, Hardee, Stevens, Cleburn, Bates, Walker, were waiting on Mission Ridge, yonder. And Sherman's Northern clock tolled on! At noon, a pair of steamers, screaming in the river across the town, telling over, in their own wild way, our mountain triumph on the right, strangely pierced the hushed breath of air between the two lines of battle with a note or two of the music of peaceful life.

At one o'clock the signal-flag at Fort Wood was a-flutter. Scanning the horizon, another flag, glancing like a lady's handkerchief, showed white across a field lying high and dry upon the ridge three miles to the northeast, and answered back. The centre and Sherman's

corps had spoken. As the hour went by, all semblance to falling tree and tolling clock had vanished; it was a rattling roar; the ring of Sherman's iron knuckles knocking at the northern door of Mission Ridge for entrance. Moving nearer the river, I could see the breath of Sherman's panting artillery, and the fiery gust from the enemy's guns on Tunnel Hill, the point of Mission Ridge. They had massed there the corps of Hardee and Buekner, as upon a battlement, utterly inaccessible, save by one steep, narrow way, commanded by their guns. A thousand men could hold it against a host. And right in front of this bold abutment of the Ridge is that broad, clear field, skirted by woods. Across this tremendous threshold up to death's door moved Sherman's column. Twice it advanced, and twice I saw it swept back in bleeding lines before the furnace-blast, until that russet field seemed some strange page ruled thick with blue and red. Bright valor was in vain; they lacked the ground to stand on; they wanted, like the giant of old story, a touch of earth to make them strong. It was the devil's own corner. Before them was a lane, whose upper end the Rebel cannon swallowed. Moving by the right flank or the left flank, nature opposed them with precipitous heights. There was nothing for it but straight across the field swept by an enfilading fire, and up to the lane down which drove the storm. They could unfold no broad front, and so the losses were less than seven hundred, that must otherwise have swelled to thousands. The musketry fire was delivered with terrible emphasis; two dwellings, in one of which Federal wounded were lying, set on fire by the enemy, began to

send up tall columns of smoke, streaked red with flame; the grand and the terrible were blended.

If Sherman did not roll the enemy along the Ridge like a carpet, at least he rendered splendid service, for he held a huge ganglion of the foe as firmly on their right as if he had them in the vice of the "lame Lemnian" who forged the thunder-bolts. General Corse's, Colonel Jones's, and Colonel Loomis's brigades led the way, and were drenched with blood. Here Colonel O'Meara, of the 90th Illinois, fell; here its Lieutenant-Colonel, Stuart, received a fearful wound. Here its brave young captains knelt at the crimson shrine, and never rose from worshipping. Here one hundred and sixty of its three hundred and seventy heroes were beaten with the bloody rain. The brigades of Generals Mathias and Smith came gallantly up to the work. Fairly blown out of the enemy's guns, and scorched with flame, they were swept down the hill only to stand fast for a new assault. Let no man dare to say they did not acquit themselves well and nobly. To living and dead in the commands of Sherman and Howard who struck a blow that day, — out of my heart I utter it, — hail and farewell! And as I think it all over, glancing again along that grand heroic line of the Federal Epic, — I commit the story with a childlike faith to History, sure that when she gives her clear, calm record of that day's famous work, standing like Ruth among the reapers in the fields that feed the world, she will declare the grandest staple of the Northwest is MAN!

The brief November afternoon was half gone; it was yet thundering on the left; along the centre all was still.

At that very hour, Whittaker and Grose, under the immediate command of General Cruft, were making a fierce assault upon the enemy's left near Rossville, four miles down towards the old field of Chicamauga. They carried the Ridge; Mission Ridge seems everywhere; they strewed its summit with the dead; they held it, the 51st Ohio, Lieutenant-Colonel Wood, playing a part of which the Old Guard in the little Corsican's palmy days might well be proud. And thus the tips of the Federal army's widespread wings flapped grandly. But it had not swooped; the gray quarry yet perched upon Mission Ridge; the hostile army was terribly battered at the edges, but there full in our front it grimly waited, biding out its time. If the horns of the crescent could not be doubled crushing together in a shapeless mass, possibly it might be sundered at its centre and tumbled in fragments over the other side of Mission Ridge. Sherman was hammering upon the left; Hooker was holding hard in Chattanooga Valley; the Fourth Corps, that rounded out our centre, grew impatient of restraint; the day was waning; but little time remained to complete the commanding general's grand design; his hour had come; his work was full before him.

And what a work that was, to make a weak man falter and a brave man think! One and a half miles to traverse, with narrow fringes of woods, rough valleys, sweeps of open fields, rocky acclivities, to the base of the Ridge, and no foot in all the breadth withdrawn from Rebel sight; no foot that could not be played upon by Rebel cannon, like a piano's keys under Thalberg's stormy fingers. The base attained, what then? A heavy work,

packed with the enemy, rimming it like a battlement. That work carried, and what then? A hill struggling up out of the valley four hundred feet, rained on by bullets, swept by shot and shell; another line of works and then, up like a Gothic roof, rough with rocks, a-wreck with fallen trees, four hundred more; another ring of fire and iron, and then the crest, and then the enemy.

To dream of such a journey would be madness; to devise it, a thing incredible; to do it, a deed impossible. But Grant was guilty of them all, and was equal to the work. The story of the battle of Mission Ridge is struck with immortality already; let the leader of the Fourth Corps bear it company.

That the centre yet lies along its silent line is still true; in five minutes it will be the wildest fiction. Let us take that little breath of grace for just one glance at the surroundings, since we shall have neither heart nor eyes for it again. Did ever battle have so vast a cloud of witnesses! The hive-shaped hills have swarmed. Clustered like bees, blackening the house-tops, lining the fortifications, over yonder across the theatre, in the seats with the Catiliacs, — everywhere, a hundred thousand beholders. Their souls are in their eyes. Not a murmur that you can hear. It is the most solemn congregation that ever stood up in the presence of the God of battles. I think of Bunker Hill as I stand here; of the thousands who witnessed that immortal struggle, and fancy there is a parallel. I think, too, that the chair of every man of them all will stand vacant against the wall to-morrow, — for to-morrow is Thanksgiving,

—and around the fireside they must give thanks without him, if they can.

At half past three a group of generals, whose names will need no Old Mortality to chisel them anew, stood upon Orchard Knob. The hero of Vicksburg was there, calm, clear, persistent, far-seeing. Thomas, the sterling and sturdy; Meigs, Hunter, Granger, Reynolds. Clusters of humbler mortals were there too, but it was anything but a turbulent crowd; the voice naturally fell into a subdued tone, and even young faces took on the gravity of later years. An order was given, and in an instant the Knob was cleared like a ship's deck for action. At twenty minutes of four Granger stood upon the parapet by Bridges's battery; the bugle swung idly at the bugler's side, the warbling fife and grumbling drum unheard:—there was to be *louder* talk,—six guns at intervals of two seconds the signal to advance. Strong and steady his voice rang out: "Number one, fire! Number two, fire! Number three, fire!"—it seemed to me the tolling of the clock of destiny—and when at "Number six, fire!" the roar throbbed out with the flash, you should have seen the dead line that had been lying behind the works all day, all night, all day again, come to resurrection in the twinkling of an eye, leap like a blade from its scabbard, and sweep with a two-mile stroke toward the Ridge. From divisions to brigades, from brigades to regiments, the order ran. A minute, and the skirmishers deploy; a minute, and the first great drops begin to patter along the line; a minute, and the musketry is in full play like the crackling whips of a hemlock fire; men go down here and there,

before your eyes; the wind lifts the smoke and drifts it away over the top of the Ridge; everything is too distinct; it is fairly *palpable*; you can touch it with your hand. The divisions of Wood and Sheridan are wading breast-deep in the valley of death.

I never can tell you what it was like. They pushed out, leaving nothing behind them. There was no reservation in that battle. On moves the line of skirmishers, like a heavy frown, and after it, at quick time, the splendid columns. At right of us and left of us and front of us, you can see the bayonets glitter in the sun. You cannot persuade yourself that Bragg was wrong, a day or two ago, when, seeing Hooker moving in, he said, "Now we shall have a Potomac review"; that this is not the parade he prophesied; that it is of a truth the harvest of death to which they go down. And so through the fringe of woods went the line. Now, out into the open ground they burst into the double-quick. Shall I call it a Sabbath day's journey, or a long half-mile? To me, that watched, it seemed endless as eternity, and yet they made it in thirty minutes. The tempest that now broke upon their heads was terrible. The enemy's fire burst out of the rifle-pits from base to summit of Mission Ridge; five batteries of Parrotts and Napoleons opened along the crest. Grape and canister and shot and shell sowed the ground with rugged iron and garnished it with the wounded and the dead. But steady and strong our column moved on.

"By heaven! It was a splendid sight to see,
For one who had no friend, no brother there,"

but to all loyal hearts, alas, and thank God, those men were friend and brother, both in one.

And over their heads, as they went, Forts Wood and Negley struck straight out like mighty pugilists right and left, raining their iron blows upon the Ridge from base to crest; Forts Palmer and King took up the quarrel, and Moccasin Point cracked its fiery whips and lashed the surly left till the wolf cowered in its corner with a growl. Bridges's battery, from Orchard Knob below, thrust its ponderous fists in the face of the enemy, and planted blows at will. Our artillery was doing splendid service. It laid its shot and shell wherever it pleased. Had giants carried them by hand they could hardly have been more accurate. All along the mountain's side, in the enemy's rifle-pits, on the crest, they fairly dotted the Ridge. Granger leaped down, sighted a gun, and in a moment, right in front, a great volume of smoke, like "the cloud by day," lifted off the summit from among the batteries, and hung motionless, kindling in the sun. The shot had struck a caisson, and that was its dying breath. In five minutes away floated another. A shell went crashing through a building in the cluster that marked Bragg's headquarters; a second killed the skeleton horses of a battery at his elbow; a third scattered a gray mass as if it had been a wasp's nest.

And all the while our lines were moving on; they had burned through the woods and swept over the rough and rolling ground like a prairie fire. Never halting, never faltering, they charged up to the first rifle-pits with a cheer, forked out the foe with their bayonets, and lay

there panting for breath. If the thunder of guns had been terrible, it was now growing sublime: it was like the footfall of God on the ledges of cloud. Our forts and batteries still thrust out their mighty arms across the valley; the guns that lined the arc of the crest fell in our front opened like the fan of Lucifer and converged their fire. It was rifles and musketry; it was grape and canister; it was shell and shrapnel. Mission Ridge was volcanic; a thousand torrents of red poured over its brink and rushed together to its base. And our men were there, bating for breath! And still the sublime diapason rolled on. Echoes that never waked before roared out from height to height, and called from the far ranges of Waldron's Ridge to Lookout. As for Mission Ridge, it had jarred to such music before; it was the "standing-board" of Chicamauga; it was behind us then; it frowns and flashes in our faces to-day. The old Army of the Cumberland was there; it breasted the storm till the storm was spent, and left the ground it held. The old Army of the Cumberland is here; it shall roll up the Ridge like a surge to its summit, and sweep triumphant down the other side. That memory and hope may have made the heart of many a blue-coat beat like a drum. "Beat," did I say? The feverish heart of the battle beats on: fifty-eight guns a minute, by the watch, is the rate of its terrible throbbing. That hill, if you climb it, will appall you. Furrowed like a summer-fallow, — bullets as if an oak had shed them; trees clipped and shorn, leaf and limb, as with the knife of some heroic gardener pruning back for richer fruit. How you attain the summit, weary and breathless, I

wait to hear; how *they* went up in the teeth of the storm no man can tell!

And all this while prisoners have been streaming out from the rear of our lines like the tails of a cloud of kites. Captured and disarmed, they needed nobody to set them going. The fire of their own comrades was like spurs in a horse's flanks, and amid the tempest of their own brewing, they ran for dear life, until they dropped like quails into the Federal rifle-pits and were safe. But our gallant legions are ont in the storm; they have carried the works at the base of the Ridge; they have fallen like leaves in winter weather. Blow, dumb bugles!

Sound the recall! "Take the rifle-pit," was the order, and it is as empty of enemies as the tombs of the prophets. Shall they turn their backs to the blast? Shall they sit down under the eaves that drip iron? Or shall they climb to the cloud of death above them, and pluck out its lightnings as they would straws from a sheaf of wheat? And now the arc of fire on the crest grows fiercer and longer. The reconnoissance of Monday had failed to develop the heavy metal of the enemy. The dull fringe of the hill kindles with the flash of great guns. I count the fleeces of white smoke that dot the Ridge, as battery after battery opens upon our line, until from the ends of the growing arc they sweep down upon it in mighty X's of fire. I count till that devil's girdle numbers thirteen batteries, and my heart cries out, "Great God, when shall the end be!" There is a poem I learned in childhood, and so did you: it is Campbell's "Hohenlinden." One line I never knew the meaning of until I read it written along that hill! It

has lighted up the whole poem for me with the glow of battle forever : —

“ And louder than the bolts of heaven,
Far flashed the red artillery ! ”

At this moment the commanding general's aids are dashing out with an order ; they radiate over the field to left, right, and front : “ Take the Ridge if you can,” — and so it went along the line. But the advancee had already set forth without it. Stout-hearted Wood, the iron-gray veteran, is rallying on his men ; stormy Turchin is delivering brave words in bad English ; Sheridan — little “ Phil ” — you may easily look down upon him without climbing a tree, and see one of the most gallant leaders of the age — is riding to and fro along the first line of rifle-pits, as calmly as a chess-player. An aid rides up with the order. “ Avery, that flask,” said the general. Quietly filling the pewter cup, Sheridan looks up at the battery that frowns above him, by Bragg's headquarters, shakes his cap amid that storm of everything that kills, when you could hardly hold your hand without catching a bullet in it, and with a “ how are you ? ” tosses off the eup. The blue battle-flag of the enemy fluttered a response to the cool salute, and the next instant the battery let fly its six guns showering Sheridan with earth. Alluding to that compliment with anything but a blank cartridge, the general said in his quiet way, “ I thought it d—d ungenerous ! ” The recording angel will drop a tear upon the word for the part he played that day. Wheeling toward the men, he cheered them to the charge, and made at the hill like a

bold-riding hunter; they were out of the rifle-pits and into the tempest and struggling up the steep, before you could get breath to tell it, and so they were throughout the inspired line.

And now you have before you one of the most startling episodes of the war; I cannot render it in words; dictionaries are beggarly things. But I may tell you they did not storm that mountain as you would think. They dash out a little way, and then slacken; they creep up, hand over hand, loading and firing, and wavering and halting, from the first line of works toward the second; they burst into a charge with a cheer and go over it. Sheets of flame baptize them; plunging shot tear away comrades on left and right; it is no longer shoulder to shoulder; it is God for us all. Under tree-trunks, among rocks, stumbling over the dead, struggling with the living; facing the steady fire of eight thousand infantry poured down upon their heads as if it were the old historic curse from heaven, they wrestle with the Ridge. Ten, fifteen, twenty minutes go by like a reluctant century. The batteries roll like a drum; between the second and the last line of works is the torrid zone of the battle; the hill sways up like a wall before them at an angle of forty-five degrees, but our brave mountaineers are clambering steadily on — up — upward still! You may think it strange, but I would not have recalled those men if I could. They would have lifted you, as they lifted me, in full view of the region of heroic grandeur; they seemed to be spurning the dull earth under their feet, and going up to do Homeric battle with the greater gods.

And what do these men follow? If you look you shall see that the thirteen thousand are not a rushing herd of human creatures; that along the Gothic roof of the Ridge a row of inverted V's is slowly moving up almost in line, a mighty lettering on the hill's broad side. At the angles of those V's is something that glitters like a wing. Your heart gives a great bound when you think what it is, — *the regimental flag*, — and glancing along the front count fifteen of those colors that were borne at Pea Ridge, waved at Shiloh, glorified at Stone River, riddled at Chicamauga. Nobler than Cæsar's rent mantle are they all! And up move the banners, now fluttering like a wounded bird, now faltering, now sinking out of sight. Three times the flag of the 27th Illinois goes down. And you know why. Three dead color-sergeants lie just there, but the flag is immortal, — thank God! — and up it comes again, and the V's move on. At the left of Wood, three regiments of Baird — Turchin, the Russian thunderbolt, is there — hurl themselves against a bold point strong with Rebel works; for a long quarter of an hour three flags are perched and motionless on a plateau under the frown of the hill. Will they linger forever? I give a look at the sun behind me; it is not more than a hand's-breadth from the edge of the mountain; its level rays bridge the valley from Chattanooga to the Ridge with beams of gold; it shines in the hostile faces; it brings out the Federal blue; it touches up the flags. O for the voice that could bid that sun stand still! I turn to the battle again; those three flags have taken flight. They are upward bound! The men of the 88th Illinois

were swept by an enfilading fire; Colonel Chandler seized the colors; they steadied into rock and swept the enemy before them with a broom of bayonets; it cost them fifty of the rank and file and two lieutenants.

The race of the flags is growing every moment more terrible. There at the right, in Colonel Sherman's brigade, a strange thing catches the eye; one of the inverted V's is turning right side up! The men struggling along the converging lines to overtake the flag have distanced it, and there the colors are, sinking down in the centre between the rising flanks. The line wavers like a great billow, and up comes the banner again, as if it heaved on a surge's shoulder! The iron sledges beat on. Hearts, loyal and brave, are on the anvil all the way from base to summit of Mission Ridge, but those dreadful hammers never intermit. Swarms of bullets sweep the hill; you can count twenty-eight balls in one little tree. Things are growing desperate up aloft; the enemy tumble rocks upon the rising line; they light the fuses and roll shells down the steep; they load the guns with handfuls of cartridges in their haste; and as if there were powder in the word, they shout "Chieamauga!" down upon the mountaineers. But it would not all do, and just as the sun, weary of the scene, was sinking out of sight, with magnificent bursts all along the line, exactly as you have seen the crested seas leap up at the breakwater, the advance surged over the crest, and in a minute those flags fluttered along the fringe where fifty guns were kennelled. God bless the flag!

What colors were first upon the mountain battlement I dare not try to say; bright Honor's self may be proud to bear — bear? — nay, proud to *follow* the hindmost. Foot by foot they had fought up the steep slippery with much blood; let them go to glory together. But this I can declare: the 79th Indiana, of Wood's division, fairly ran over the rifle-pits, and left its whole line in the rear, and its breathless color-bearer led the way. But a few steps between him and the summit, he grasped a little tree that bravely elung there, and away he went, hand over hand, like a sailor up the shrouds, and shook his exultant flag above the crest. This I can declare: John Cheevers, of the 88th Illinois, planted his flag by Bragg's headquarters, and it kindled there in the setting sun, at the very heels of the enemy. A minute, and they were all there, fluttering along the Ridge from left to right. The routed hordes rolled off to the north, rolled off to the east, like the clouds of a worn-out storm. Bragg, ten minutes before, was putting men back into the rifle-pits. His gallant gray was straining a nerve for him now, and the man rode on horseback into Dixie's bosom, who, arrayed in some prophet's discarded mantle, foretold, on Monday, that the Yankees would leave Chattanooga in five days. They left it in three, and by the way of Mission Ridge, straight over the mountains as their forefathers went! As Sheridan rode up to the guns, the heels of Breckenridge's horse glittered in the last rays of sunshine. That crest was hardly "well off with the old love before it was on with the new."

But the scene on that narrow plateau can never be

painted. As the blue-coats surged over its edge, cheer on cheer rang like bells through the valley of the Chicamauga. Men flung themselves exhausted upon the ground. They laughed and wept, shook hands, embraced; turned round and did all four over again. It was as wild as a carnival. The general was received with a shout. "Soldiers," he said, "you ought to be court-martialled, every man of you. I ordered you to take the rifle-pits, and you scaled the mountain!" but it was not Mars's horrid front exactly with which he said it, for his cheeks were wet with tears as honest as the blood that reddened all the route. Wood uttered words that rang like "Napoleons," and Sheridan, the rowels at his horse's flanks, was ready for a dash down the Ridge with a view-halloo for a fox-hunt.

But you must not think this was all there was of the scene on the crest, for fight and frolic were strangely mingled. Not a gray-coat had dreamed a man of us all would live to reach the summit, and when a little wave of the Federal cheer rolled up and broke over the crest, they defiantly cried, "Hurrah and be d—d"; the next minute the 65th Ohio followed the voice, the enemy delivered their fire, and tumbled down in the rifle-pits. No sooner had the soldiers scrambled to the Ridge and straightened themselves, than up muskets and away they blazed. One of them, fairly beside himself between laughing and crying, seemed puzzled at which end of his piece he should load, and so, abandoning the gun and the problem together, he made a catapult of himself and fell to hurling stones after the enemy. And he said, as he threw — well, "our army,"

you know, "swore terribly in Flanders." Bayonets glistened and muskets rattled. Sheridan's horse was killed under him; "Richard" was not in his *rôle*, and so he leaped upon a Rebel gun for want of another. The artillerists are driven from their batteries at the edge of the sword and the point of the bayonet; two guns are swung around upon their old masters. But there is nobody to load them. Light and heavy artillery do not belong to the winged kingdom. Two infantry men claiming to be old artillerists volunteer. Granger turns captain of the guns, and — right about wheel! — in a moment they are growling after the flying enemy. I say flying, but that is figurative. The many run like Spanish merinoes, but the few fight like lions at bay; they load and fire as they retreat; they are fairly scorching out of position. It was so where Turehin struck them, and so where Wood and Sheridan gave them the iron glove. Colonel Harker is slashing away with his sabre in a ring of foes. Down goes his horse under him; they have him on the hip; one of them is taking deliberate aim, when up rushes Lieutenant Johnson, of the 42d Illinois, claps a pistol to one ear and roars in at the other, "Who the hell are you shooting at?" The fellow drops his piece, gasps out, "I surrender," and the next instant the gallant lieutenant falls sharply wounded. He is a "roll of honor" officer straight up from the ranks. A little German in Wood's division is pierced like the lid of a pepper-box, but is neither dead nor wounded. "See here," he says, rushing up to a comrade, "a pullet hit the breech of mine gun, — a pullet in mine bucket-pool,

—a pullet in mine goat-tail,—dey shoots me three, five dime, and by tam I gives dem h—l yet!”

But I can render you no idea of the battle caldron that boiled on the plateau. An incident, here and there, I have given you, and you must fill out the picture for yourself. Dead soldiers lay thick around Bragg's headquarters and along the ridge. Scabbards, broken arms, artillery horses, wrecks of gun-carriages, bloody garments, strewed the scene; and, tread lightly, O true-hearted, the boys in blue are lying there; no more the sounding charge; no more the brave wild cheer; and never for them, sweet as the breath of new-mown hay in the old home fields, “the Soldier's Return from the War.” A little waif of a drummer-boy, somehow drifted up the mountain in the surge, lies there, his pale face upward, a blue spot on his breast. Muffle his drum for the poor child and his mother.

With the receding flight and swift pursuit the battle died away in murmurs, far down the valley of the Chicamauga; Sheridan was again in the saddle, and with his command spurring on after the enemy. Tall columns of smoke were rising at the left. The enemy were burning a train of stores a mile long. In the exploding caissons we had “the cloud by day,” and now we were having “the pillar of fire by night.” The sun, the golden dish of the scales that balance day and night, had hardly gone down, when up, beyond Mission Ridge, rose the silver side, for that night it was full moon. The troubled day was done.

The ardor of the men had been quenchless; there had been three days of fitful fever, and after it, alas, a

multitude slept well. The work on the right, left, and centre cost us full four thousand killed and wounded. There is a tremble of the lip but a flash of pride in the eye as the soldier tells with how many he went in, — how expressive is that “went in!” Of a truth it was wading in deep waters, — with how few he came out. I cannot try to swing the burden clear from any heart by throwing into the scale upon the other side the dead-weight of fifty-two pieces of captured artillery, ten thousand stand of arms, and heaps of dead enemies, or by driving upon it a herd of seven thousand prisoners. Nothing of all this can lighten that burden a single ounce; but those three days’ work brought Tennessee to resurrection — set the flag, that fairest blossom in all this flowery world, to blooming in its native soil again.

That splendid march from the Federal line of battle to the crest was made in one hour and five minutes, but it was a grander march toward the end of carnage; a glorious campaign of sixty-five minutes toward the white borders of peace. It made that fleeting November afternoon imperishable. Let the struggle be known as the Battle of Mission Ridge, and now that calmer days have come, men make pilgrimage and women smile again among the mountains of the Cumberland, but they need no guide. Rust may have eaten the guns; the graves of the heroes may have subsided like waves weary of their troubling; the soldier and his leader may have lain down together; but there, embossed upon the globe, Mission Ridge will stand its fitting monument forever.



THE FORTY-SEVEN RÔNINS.

BY A. BERTRAM MITFORD.

UBEG my readers to fancy themselves wafted away to the shores of the Bay of Yedo, — a fair, smiling landscape : gentle slopes, crested by a dark fringe of pines and firs, lead down to the sea ; the quaint eaves of many a temple and holy shrine peep out here and there from the groves ; the bay itself is studded with picturesque fisher-craft, the torches of which shine by night like glow-worms among the outlying forts ; far away to the west loom the goblin-haunted heights of Oyama, and beyond the twin hills of the Hakoné Pass, Fuji-Yama, the Peerless Mountain, solitary and grand, stands in the centre of the plain, from which it sprang, vomiting flames, twenty-one centuries ago. For a hundred and sixty years the huge mountain has been at peace ; but the frequent earthquakes still tell of hidden fires, and none can say when the red-hot stones and ashes may once more fall like rain over five provinces.

In the midst of a nest of venerable trees in Takanawa, a suburb of Yedo, is hidden Sengakuji, or the Spring Hill Temple, renowned throughout the length and breadth

of the land for its cemetery, which contains the graves of the Forty-seven Rônins,* famous in Japanese history, heroes of Japanese drama, the tale of whose deeds I am about to transcribe.

On the left-hand side of the main court of the temple is a chapel, in which, surmounted by a gilt figure of Kwanyin, the Goddess of Mercy, are enshrined the images of the forty-seven men and of the master whom they loved so well. The statues are carved in wood, the faces colored, and the dresses richly lacquered. As works of art, they have great merit, the action of the heroes, each armed with his favorite weapon, being wonderfully lifelike and spirited. Some are venerable men, with thin gray hair (one is seventy-seven years old); others are mere boys of sixteen. Close by the chapel, at the side of a path leading up the hill, is a little well of pure water, fenced in and adorned with a tiny fernery, over which is an inscription setting forth that "This is the well in which the head was washed; you must not wash your hands or your feet here." A

* The word *Rônin* means, literally, a "wave-man," one who is tossed about hither and thither, as a wave of the sea. It is used to designate persons of gentle blood, entitled to bear arms, who, having become separated from their feudal lords, by their own act, or by dismissal, or by fate, wander about the country in the capacity of somewhat disreputable knights-errant, without ostensible means of living, offering themselves for hire to new masters, or supporting themselves by pillage. Sometimes, for political reasons, a man will become Rônin, in order that his lord may not be implicated in some deed of blood in which he is about to engage.

little farther on is a stall, at which a poor old man earns a pittance by selling books, pictures, and medals, commemorating the loyalty of the Forty-seven; and higher up, shaded by a grove of stately trees, is a neat enclosure, kept up, as a signboard announces, by voluntary contributions, round which are ranged forty-eight little tombstones, each decked with evergreens, each with its tribute of water and incense for the comfort of the departed spirit. There were forty-seven Rônins; there are forty-eight tombstones, and the story of the forty-eighth is truly characteristic of Japanese ideas of honor. Almost touching the rail of the graveyard is a more imposing monument, under which lies buried the lord whose death his followers piously avenged.

At the beginning of the eighteenth century lived a daimio, called Asano Takumi no Kami, the lord of the castle of Akô, in the province of Harima. Now it happened that an Imperial ambassador from the court of the Mikado, having been sent to the Shogun* at Yedo, Takumi no Kami and another noble called Kamci Sama were appointed to receive and feast the envoy; and a high official, named Kira Kôtsuké no Suké, was named to teach them the proper ceremonies to be observed upon the occasion. The two nobles were accordingly forced to go daily to the castle to listen to the instructions of Kôt-

* The full title of the Tycoon was Sei-i-tai-Shogun, "Barbarian-repressing Commander-in-chief." The style Tai Kun, "Great Prince," was borrowed in order to convey the idea of sovereignty to foreigners, at the time of the conclusion of the treaties.

suké no Suké. But this Kôtsuké no Suké was a man greedy of money; and as he deemed that the presents which the two daimios, according to time-honored custom, had brought him in return for his instruction, were mean and unworthy, he conceived a great hatred against them, and took no pains in teaching them, but, on the contrary, rather sought to make laughing-stocks of them. Takumi no Kami, restrained by a stern sense of duty, bore his insults with patience; but Kamei Sama, who had less control over his temper, was violently incensed, and determined to kill Kôtsuké no Suké.

One night when his duties at the castle were ended, Kamei Sama returned to his own palace, and having summoned his counsellors to a secret conference, said to them: "Kôtsuké no Suké has insulted Takumi no Kami and me, during our service in attendance on the Imperial envoy. This is all against decency, and I was minded to kill him on the spot; but I bethought me that if I did such a deed within the precincts of the castle, not only would my own life be forfeit, but my family and vassals would be ruined; so I stayed my hand. Still, the life of such a wretch is a sorrow to the people, and to-morrow when I go to court I will slay him; my mind is made up, and I will listen to no remonstrance." And as he spoke, his face became livid with rage.

Now one of Kamei Sama's counsellors was a man of great judgment, and when he saw from his lord's manner that remonstrance would be useless, he said: "Your lordship's words are law; your servant will make all preparations accordingly; and to-morrow, when your lordship goes to court, if this Kôtsuké no Suké should

again be insolent, let him die the death." And his lord was pleased at this speech, and waited with impatience for the day to break, that he might return to court and kill his enemy.

But the counsellor went home, and was sorely troubled, and thought anxiously about what his prince had said. And as he reflected, it occurred to him that since Kôtsuké no Suké had the reputation of being a miser, he would certainly be open to a bribe, and that it was better to pay any sum, no matter how great, than that his lord and his house should be ruined. So he collected all the money he could, and, giving it to his servants to carry, rode off in the night to Kôtsuké no Suké's palace, and said to his retainers: "My master, who is now in attendance upon the Imperial envoy, owes much thanks to my Lord Kôtsuké no Suké, who has been at so great pains to teach him the proper ceremonies to be observed during the reception of the Imperial envoy. This is but a shabby present which he has sent by me, but he hopes that his lordship will condescend to accept it, and commend himself to his lordship's favor." And, with these words, he produced a thousand ounces of silver for Kôtsuké no Suké, and a hundred ounces to be distributed among his retainers.

When the latter saw the money, their eyes sparkled with pleasure, and they were profuse in their thanks; and begging the counsellor to wait a little, they went and told their master of the lordly present which had arrived with a polite message from Kamei Sama. Kôtsuké no Suké, in eager delight, sent for the counsellor into an inner chamber, and, after thanking him, promised on the

morrow to instruct his master carefully in all the different points of etiquette. So the counsellor, seeing the miser's glee, rejoiced at the success of his plan; and, having taken his leave, returned home in high spirits. But Kamei Sama, little thinking how his vassal had propitiated his enemy, lay brooding over his vengeance, and on the following morning at daybreak went to court in solemn procession.

When Kôtsuké no Suké met him, his manner had completely changed, and nothing could exceed his courtesy. "You have come early to court this morning, my Lord Kamei," said he. "I cannot sufficiently admire your zeal. I shall have the honor to call your attention to several points of etiquette to-day. I must beg your lordship to excuse my previous conduct, which must have seemed very rude; but I am naturally of a cross-grained disposition, so I pray you to forgive me." And as he kept on humbling himself and making fair speeches, the heart of Kamei Sama was gradually softened, and he renounced his intention of killing him. Thus, by the cleverness of his counsellor, was Kamei Sama, with all his house, saved from ruin.

Shortly after this, Takumi no Kami, who had sent no present, arrived at the castle, and Kôtsuké no Suké turned him into ridicule even more than before, provoking him with sneers and covert insults; but Takumi no Kami affected to ignore all this, and submitted himself patiently to Kôtsuké no Suké's orders.

This conduct, so far from producing a good effect, only made Kôtsuké no Suké despise him the more, until at last he said haughtily: "Here, my Lord of Takumi, the

ribbon of my sock has come untied; be so good as to tie it up for me."

Takumi no Kami, although burning with rage at the affront, still thought that as he was on duty he was bound to obey, and tied up the ribbon of the sock. Then Kôtsuké no Suké, turning from him, petulantly exclaimed: "Why, how clumsy you are! You cannot so much as tie up the ribbon of a sock properly! Any one can see that you are a boor from the country, and know nothing of the manners of Yedo." And with a scornful laugh he moved toward an inner room.

But the patience of Takumi no Kami was exhausted; this last insult was more than he could bear.

"Stop a moment, my lord," cried he.

"Well, what is it?" replied the other. And, as he turned round, Takumi no Kami drew his dirk, and aimed a blow at his head; but Kôtsuké no Suké being protected by the court cap which he wore, the wound was but a scratch, so he ran away; and Takumi no Kami, pursuing him, tried a second time to cut him down, but, missing his aim, struck his dirk into a pillar. At this moment an officer, named Kajikawa Yosobei, seeing the affray, rushed up, and holding back the infuriated noble, gave Kôtsuké no Suké time to make good his escape.

Then arose a great uproar and confusion, and Takumi no Kami was arrested and disarmed, and confined in one of the apartments of the palace, under the care of the censors. A council was held, and the prisoner was given over to the safeguard of a daimio, called Tamura Ukiô no Daibu, who kept him in close custody in his own house, to the great grief of his wife and of his retainers;

and when the deliberations of the council were completed, it was decided that, as he had committed an outrage and attacked another man within the precincts of the palace, he must perform *hara kiri*, — that is, commit suicide by disembowelling; his goods must be confiscated, and his family ruined. Such was the law. So Takumi no Kami performed *hara kiri*, his castle of Akô was confiscated, and his retainers, having become Rôlins, some of them took service with other daimios, and others became merchants.

Amongst these retainers was his principal councillor, a man called Ôishi Kuranosuké, who, with forty-six other faithful dependants, formed a league to avenge their master's death by killing Kôtsuké no Suké. This Ôishi Kuranosuké was absent at the castle of Akô at the time of the affray, which, had he been with his prince, would never have occurred; for, being a wise man, he would not have failed to propitiate Kôtsuké no Suké by sending him suitable presents; while the councillor who was in attendance on the prince at Yedo was a dullard, who neglected this precaution, and so caused the death of his master and the ruin of his house.

So Ôishi Kuranosuké and his forty-six companions began to lay their plans of vengeance against Kôtsuké no Suké; but the latter was so well guarded by a body of men lent to him by a daimio called Uyésugi Sama, whose daughter he had married, that they saw the only way of attaining their end would be by throwing their enemy off his guard. With this object, they separated and disguised themselves, some as carpenters or craftsmen, others as merchants; and their chief, Kuranosuké,

went to Kiôto, and built a house in the quarter called Yamashina, where he took to frequenting houses of the worst repute, and gave himself up to drunkenness and debauchery, as if nothing were further from his mind than revenge. Kôtsuké no Suké, in the mean while, suspecting that Takumi no Kami's former retainers would be scheming against his life, secretly sent spies to Kiôto, and caused a faithful account to be kept of all that Kuranosuké did. The latter, however, determined thoroughly to delude the enemy into a false security, went on leading a dissolute life. One day, as he was returning home drunk from some low haunt, he fell down in the street and went to sleep, and all the passers-by laughed him to scorn. It happened that a Satsuma man saw this, and said: "Is not this Oishi Kuranosuké, who was a counsellor of Asano Takumi no Kami, and who, not having the heart to avenge his lord, gives himself up to women and wine? See how he lies drunk in the public street! Faithless beast! Fool and craven! Unworthy the name of a Samurai!"*

And he trod on Kuranosuké's face as he slept, and spat upon him. But when Kôtsuké no Suké's spies reported all this at Yedo, he was greatly relieved at the news, and felt secure from danger.

One day Kuranosuké's wife, who was bitterly grieved to see her husband lead this abandoned life, went to him and said: "My lord, you told me at first that your debauchery was but a trick to make your enemy relax in watchfulness. But indeed, indeed, this has gone too

* Samurai, a man belonging to the *Buké* or military class, entitled to bear arms.

far. I pray and beseech you to put some restraint upon yourself."

"Trouble me not," replied Kuranosuké, "for I will not listen to your whining. Since my way of life is displeasing to you, I will divorce you, and you may go about your business; and I will buy some pretty young girl from one of the public houses, and marry her. I am sick of the sight of an old woman like you about the house, so get you gone, — the sooner the better."

So saying, he flew into a violent rage, and his wife, terror-stricken, pleaded piteously for mercy.

"O my lord, unsay those terrible words! I have been your faithful wife for twenty years, and have borne you three children; in sickness and in sorrow I have been with you; you cannot be so cruel as to turn me out of doors now. Have pity! Have pity!"

"Cease this useless wailing. My mind is made up, and you must go; and as the children are in my way also, you are welcome to take them with you."

When she heard her husband speak thus, in her grief she sought her eldest son, Oishi Chikara, and begged him to plead for her and pray that she might be pardoned. But nothing would turn Kuranosuké from his purpose; so his wife was sent away, with the two younger children, and went back to her native place. But Oishi Chikara remained with his father.

The spies communicated all this without fail to Kôtsuké no Suké; and he, when he heard how Kuranosuké, having turned his wife and children out of doors and bought a concubine, was grovelling in a life of drunkenness, began to think he had no longer anything to

fear from the retainers of Takumi no Kami, who must be cowards, without the courage to avenge their lord. So by degrees he began to keep a less strict watch, and sent back half of the guard which had been lent to him by his father-in-law, Uyésugi Sama. Little did he think how he was falling into the trap laid for him by Kuranosuké, who, in his zeal to slay his lord's enemy, thought nothing of divorcing his wife and sending away his children. Admirable and faithful man!

In this way Kuranosuké continued to throw dust into the eyes of his foe, by persisting in his apparently shameless conduct; but his associates all went to Yedo, and having, in their several capacities as workmen and peddlers, contrived to gain access to Kôtsuké no Suké's house, made themselves familiar with the plan of the building and the arrangement of the different rooms, and ascertained the character of the inmates, — who were brave and loyal men, and who were cowards; upon all of which matters they sent regular reports to Kuranosuké. And when at last it became evident from the letters which arrived from Yedo that Kôtsuké no Suké was thoroughly off his guard, Kuranosuké rejoiced that the day of vengeance was at hand; and, having appointed a trysting-place at Yedo, he fled secretly from Kiôto, eluding the vigilance of his enemy's spies. Then the forty-seven men, having laid all their plans, bided their time patiently.

It was now midwinter, the twelfth month of the year, and the cold was bitter. One night, during a heavy fall of snow, when the whole world was hushed, and peaceful men were stretched in sleep upon the mats, the

Rônins determined that no more favorable opportunity could occur for carrying out their purpose. So they took counsel together, and, having divided their band into two parties, assigned to each man his post. One band, led by Oishi Kuranosuké, was to attack the front gate; and the other, under his son Oishi Chikara, was to attack the postern of Kôtsuké no Suké's house. But as Chikara was only sixteen years of age, Yoshida Chiuza-yémon was appointed to act as his guardian. Further it was arranged that a drum, beaten at the order of Kuranosuké, should be the signal for the simultaneous attack; and that if any one slew Kôtsuké no Suké and cut off his head, he should blow a shrill whistle, as a signal to his comrades, who would hurry to the spot, and, having identified the head, carry it off to the temple called Sengakuji, and lay it as an offering before the tomb of their dead lord. Then they must report their deed to the government, and await the sentence of death which would surely be passed upon them. To this the Rônins one and all pledged themselves. Midnight was fixed upon as the hour; and the forty-seven comrades, having made all ready for the attack, partook of a farewell feast together, for on the morrow they must die. Then Oishi Kuranosuké addressed the band, and said:—

“To-night we shall attack our enemy in his palace; his retainers will certainly resist us, and we shall be obliged to kill them. But to slay old men and women and children is a pitiful thing; therefore I pray you to take great heed lest you kill a single helpless person.”

His comrades all applauded this speech, and so they remained, waiting for the hour of midnight to arrive.

When the appointed hour came the Rônins set forth. The wind howled furiously, and the driving snow beat in their faces; but little cared they for wind or snow as they hurried on their road, eager for revenge. At last they reached Kôtsuké no Suké's house, and divided themselves into two bands; and Chikara, with twenty-three men, went round to the back gate. Then four men, by means of a ladder of ropes, which they hung on to the roof of the porch, effected an entry into the court-yard; and, as they saw signs that all the inmates of the house were asleep, they went into the porter's lodge where the guard slept, and, before the latter had time to recover from their astonishment, bound them. The terrified guard prayed hard for mercy, that their lives might be spared; and to this the Rônins agreed on condition that the keys of the gate should be given up; but the others tremblingly said that the keys were kept in the house of one of their officers, and that they had no means of obtaining them. Then the Rônins lost patience, and with a hammer dashed in pieces the big wooden bolt which secured the gate, and the doors flew open to the right and to the left. At the same time Chikara and his party broke in by the back gate.

Then Oishi Kuranosuké sent a messenger to the neighboring houses, bearing the following message: "We, the Rônins who were formerly in the service of Asano Takumi no Kami, are this night about to break into the palace of Kôtsuké no Suké to avenge our lord. As we are neither night robbers nor ruffians, no hurt will be done to the neighboring houses. We pray you to set your minds at rest." And as Kôtsuké no Suké was

hated by his neighbors for his covetousness, they did not unite their forces to assist him. Another precaution was yet taken. Lest any of the people inside should run out to call the relatives of the family to the rescue, and these coming in force should interfere with the plans of the Rônins, Kuranosuké stationed ten of his men, armed with bows, on the roof of the four sides of the court-yard, with orders to shoot any retainers who might attempt to leave the place. Having thus laid all his plans and posted his men, Kuranosuké with his own hand beat the drum and gave the signal for attack.

Ten of Kôtsuké no Suké's retainers, hearing the noise, woke up, and, drawing their swords, rushed into the front room to defend their master. At this moment the Rônins, who had burst open the door of the front hall, entered the same room. Then arose a furious fight between the two parties, in the midst of which Chikara, leading his men through the garden, broke into the back of the house; and Kôtsuké no Suké, in terror of his life, took refuge, with his wife and female servants, in a closet in the veranda; while the rest of his retainers, who slept in the barraek outside the house, made ready to go to the rescue. But the Rônins who had come in by the front door, and were fighting with the ten retainers, ended by overpowering and slaying the latter, without losing one of their own number; after which, forcing their way bravely toward the back rooms, they were joined by Chikara and his men, and the two bands were united in one.

By this time the remainder of Kôtsuké no Suké's men had come in, and the fight became general; and Kura-

nosuké, sitting on a camp-stool, gave his orders and directed the Rônins. Soon the inmates of the house perceived that they were no match for their enemy, so they tried to send out intelligence of their plight to Uyésugi Sama, their lord's father-in-law, begging him to come to the rescue with all the force at his command. But the messengers were shot down by the archers whom Kuranosuké had posted on the roof. So, no help coming, they fought on in despair. Then Kuranosuké cried out with a loud voice: "Kôtsuké no Suké alone is our enemy; let some one go inside and bring him forth dead or alive!"

Now in front of Kôtsuké no Suké's private room stood three brave retainers with drawn swords. The first was Kobayashi Héhachi, the second was Waku Handaiyu, and the third was Shimidzu Ikkaku, — all good men and true, and expert swordsmen. So stoutly did these men lay about them, that for a while they kept the whole of the Rônins at bay, and at one moment even forced them back. When Oishi Kuranosuké saw this, he ground his teeth with rage, and shouted to his men: "What! did not every man of you swear to lay down his life in avenging his lord? And now you are driven back by three men! Cowards, not fit to be spoken to! to die fighting in a master's cause should be the noblest ambition of a retainer!" Then turning to his own son Chikara, he said: "Here, boy! engage those men; and if they are too strong for you, die!"

Spurred by these words, Chikara seized a spear, and gave battle to Waku Handaiyu, but could not hold his ground, and backing by degrees, was driven out into the

garden, where he missed his footing and slipped into a pond; but as Handaiyu, thinking to kill him, looked down into the pond, Chikara cut his enemy in the leg and caused him to fall, and then crawling out of the water despatched him. In the mean while Kobayashi Héhachi and Shimidzu Ikkaku had been killed by the other Rônins, and of all Kôtsuké no Suké's retainers not one fighting-man remained. Chikara, seeing this, went with his bloody sword in his hand into a back room to search for Kôtsuké no Suké, but he only found the son of the latter, a young lord named Kira Sahioyé, who, carrying a halberd, attacked him, but was soon wounded, and fled. Thus, the whole of Kôtsuké no Suké's men having been killed, there was an end of the fighting; but as yet no trace of Kôtsuké no Suké was to be found.

Then Kuranosuké divided his men into several parties and searched the whole house, but all in vain; women and children weeping were alone to be seen. At this the forty-seven men began to lose heart in regret that after all their toil they had allowed their enemy to escape them, and there was a moment when in their despair they agreed to commit suicide together on the spot; but they determined to make one more effort. So Kuranosuké went into Kôtsuké no Suké's sleeping-room, and, touching the quilt with his hands, exclaimed, "I have just felt the bedclothes, and they are yet warm; and so methinks our enemy is not far off. He must certainly be hidden somewhere in the house." Greatly excited by this, the Rônins renewed their search. In the raised part of the room, near the place of honor, a picture was hanging. Taking down this picture, they saw there was a large

hole in the plastered wall; and on thrusting in a spear, they could feel nothing beyond it. So one of the Rônins, called Yazama Jiutarô, got into the hole, and found that on the other side there was a little court-yard, in which stood an outhouse for holding charcoal and fire-wood. Looking into the outhouse, he spied something white at the farther end, at which he struck with his spear, when two armed men sprang out upon him and tried to cut him down; but he kept them back until one of his comrades came up and killed one of the two men and engaged the other, while Jiutarô entered the outhouse and felt about with his spear. Again seeing something white, he struck it with his lance, when a cry of pain betrayed that it was a man; so he rushed up, and the man in white clothes, who had been wounded in the thigh, drew a dirk and aimed a blow at him. But Jiutarô wrested the dirk from him, and, clutching him by the collar, dragged him out of the outhouse. Then the other Rônin came up, and they examined the prisoner attentively, and saw that he was a noble-looking man, some sixty years of age, dressed in a white satin sleeping-robe, which was stained by the blood from the thigh-wound which Jiutarô had inflicted. The two men felt convinced that this was no other than Kôtsuké no Suké, and they asked him his name, but he gave no answer; so they gave the signal whistle, and all their comrades came together at the call. Then Oishi Kurano-suké, bringing a lantern, scanned the old man's features, and it was indeed Kôtsuké no Suké; and if further proof were wanting, he still bore a scar on his forehead where their master, Asano Takumi no Kami, had wounded him

during the affray in the castle. There being no possibility of mistake, therefore, Oishi Kuranosuké went down on his knees, and, addressing the old man very respectfully, said :—

“My lord, we are the retainers of Asano Takumi no Kami. Last year your lordship and our master quarrelled in the palace, and our master was sentenced to *hara kiri*, and his family was ruined. We have come to-night to avenge him, as is the duty of faithful and loyal men. I pray your lordship to acknowledge the justice of our purpose. And now, my lord, we beseech you to perform *hara kiri*. I myself shall have the honor to act as your second, and when, with all humility, I shall have received your lordship’s head, it is my intention to lay it as an offering upon the grave of Asano Takumi no Kami.”

Thus, in consideration of the high rank of Kôtsuké no Suké, the Rônins treated him with the greatest courtesy, and over and over again entreated him to perform *hara kiri*. But he crouched speechless and trembling. At last Kuranosuké, seeing that it was vain to urge him to die the death of a nobleman, forced him down, and cut off his head with the same dirk with which Asano Takumi no Kami had killed himself. Then the forty-seven comrades, elated at having accomplished their design, placed the head in a bucket, and prepared to depart; but before leaving the house they carefully extinguished all the lights and fires in the place, lest by any accident a fire should break out and the neighbors suffer.

As they were on their way to Takanawa, the suburb in which the temple called Sengakuji stands, the day

broke, and the people flocked out to see the forty-seven men, who, with their clothes and arms all blood-stained, presented a terrible appearance; and every one praised them, wondering at their valor and faithfulness. But they expected every moment that Kôtsuké no Suké's father-in-law would attack them and carry off the head, and made ready to die bravely, sword in hand. However, they reached Takanawa in safety, for Matsudaira Aki no Kami, one of the eighteen chief daimios of Japan, of whose house Asano Takumi no Kami had been a cadet, had been highly pleased when he heard of the last night's work, and he had made ready to assist the Rônins in case they were attacked. So Kôtsuké no Suké's father-in-law dared not pursue them.

At about seven in the morning they came opposite to the palace of Matsudaira Mutsu no Kami, the Prince of Sendai; and the Prince, hearing of it, sent for one of his counsellors and said:—

“The retainers of Takumi no Kami have slain their lord's enemy, and are passing this way. I cannot sufficiently admire their devotion; so, as they must be tired and hungry after their night's work, do you go and invite them to come in here, and set some gruel and a cup of wine before them.”

So the councillor went out and said to Oishi Kuranosuké: “Sir, I am a councillor of the Prince of Sendai, and my master bids me beg you, as you must be worn out after all you have undergone, to come in and partake of such poor refreshment as we can offer you. This is my message to you from my lord.”

“I thank you, sir,” replied Kuranosuké. “It is very

good of his lordship to trouble himself to think of us. We shall accept his kindness gratefully."

So the Forty-seven Rônins went into the palace, and were feasted with gruel and wine, and all the retainers of the Prince of Sendai came and praised them.

Then Kuranosuké turned to the counsellor and said: "Sir, we are truly indebted to you for this kind hospitality; but as we have still to hurry to Sengakuji, we must needs humbly take our leave." And, after returning many thanks to their hosts, they left the palace of the Prince of Sendai and hastened to Sengakuji, where they were met by the abbot of the monastery, who went to the front gate to receive them, and led them to the tomb of Takumi no Kami.

And when they came to their lord's grave, they took the head of Kôtsuké no Suké, and having washed it clean in a well hard by, laid it as an offering before the tomb. When they had done this, they engaged the priests of the temple to come and read prayers while they burned incense. First Oishi Kuranosuké burned incense, and then his son Oishi Chikara, and after them the other forty-five men performed the same ceremony. Then Kuranosuké, having given all the money that he had by him to the abbot, said: —

"When we forty-seven men shall have performed *hara kiri*, I beg you to bury us decently. I rely upon your kindness. This is but a trifle that I have to offer; such as it is, let it be spent in masses for our souls."

And the abbot, marvelling at the faithful courage of the men, with tears in his eyes pledged himself to fulfil their wishes. So the Forty-seven Rônins, with their minds at

rest, waited patiently until they should receive the orders of the government.

At last they were summoned to the Snpreme Court, where the governors of Yedo and the public censors had assembled; and the sentence passed upon them was as follows: "Whereas, neither respecting the dignity of the city nor fearing the government, having leagued yourselves together to slay your enemy, you violently broke into the house of Kira Kôtsnké no Snké by night and murdered him, the sentence of the court is, that, for this audacious conduct, you perform *hara kiri*."

When the sentence had been read, the Forty-seven Rônins were divided into four parties, and handed over to the safe-keeping of four different daimios; and sheriffs were sent to the palaces of those daimios, in whose presence the Rônins were made to perform *hara kiri*. But, as from the very beginning they had made up their minds that to this end they must come, they met their death nobly; and their corpses were carried to Sengakuji and buried in front of the tomb of their master, Asano Takumi no Kami. And when the fame of this became noised abroad, the people flocked to pray at the graves of these faithful men.

Among those who came to pray was a Satsuma man, who, prostrating himself before the grave of Oishi Kuranosuké, said: "When I saw you lying drunk by the roadside at Yamashina, in Kiôto, I knew not that you were plotting to avenge your lord; and, thinking you to be a faithless man, I trampled on you and spat in your face as I passed. And now I have come to ask pardon and offer atonement for the insult of last year." With

these words, he prostrated himself again before the grave, and, drawing a dirk from his girdle, stabbed himself in the belly and died. And the chief priest of the temple, taking pity upon him, buried him by the side of the Rônins; and his tomb still remains to be seen with those of the forty-seven comrades.

This is the end of the story of the Forty-seven Rônins.

A terrible picture of fierce heroism which it is impossible not to admire. In the Japanese mind this feeling of admiration is unmixed, and hence it is that the Forty-seven Rônins receive almost divine honors. Pious hands still deck their graves with green boughs and burn incense upon them; the clothes and arms which they wore are preserved carefully in a fire-proof storehouse attached to the temple, and exhibited yearly to admiring crowds, who behold them probably with little less veneration than is accorded to the relics of Aix-la-Chapelle or Trèves; and once in sixty years the monks of Sengakuji reap quite a harvest for the good of their temple by holding a commemorative fair or festival, to which the people flock during nearly two months.

A silver key once admitted me to a private inspection of the relics. We were ushered, my friend and I, into a back apartment of the spacious temple, overlooking one of those marvellous miniature gardens, cunningly adorned with rockeries and dwarf trees, in which the Japanese delight. One by one, carefully labelled and indexed boxes containing the precious articles were brought out and opened by the chief priest. Such a curious medley of old rags and scraps of metal and

wood ! Home-made chain-armor, composed of wads of leather secured together by pieces of iron, bear witness to the secrecy with which the Rônins made ready for the fight. To have bought armor would have attracted attention, so they made it with their own hands. Old moth-eaten surcoats, bits of helmets, three flutes, a writing-box that must have been any age at the time of the tragedy, and is now tumbling to pieces ; tattered trousers of what once was rich silk brocade, now all unravelled and befringed, scraps of leather, part of an old gauntlet, crests and badges, bits of sword-handles, spear-heads, and dirks, the latter all red with rust, but with certain patches more deeply stained, as if the fatal clots of blood were never to be blotted out, — all these were reverently shown to us. Among the confusion and litter were a number of documents, yellow with age and much worn at the folds. One was a plan of Kôtsuké no Suké's house, which one of the Rônins obtained by marrying the daughter of the builder who designed it.

I will add one anecdote to show the sanctity which is attached to the graves of the Forty-seven. In the month of September, 1868, a certain man came to pray before the grave of Oishi Chikara. Having finished his prayers, he deliberately performed *hara kiri*, and, the wound not being mortal, despatched himself by cutting his throat. Upon his person were found papers setting forth that, being a Rônin and without means of earning a living, he had petitioned to be allowed to enter the clan of the Prince of Chôshiu, which he looked upon as the noblest clan in the realm ; his petition having been refused, nothing remained for him but to die, for to be a

Rônin was hateful to him, and he would serve no other master than the Prince of Chôshiu; what more fitting place could he find in which to put an end to his life than the graveyard of these braves? This happened at about two hundred yards' distance from my house, and when I saw the spot an hour or two later, the ground was all bespattered with blood and disturbed by the death-struggles of the man.





A CHANCE CHILD.

BY ISABELLA MAYO.

THERE had been a funeral from a little, old, deep-windowed house in the chief street of Dingwall, Ross-shire. An old maid's funeral, attended only by a grave, decorous "writer," two young men, strangers in the place, and a girl, little Mary Dallas, who had no more right to that name than she had to anything else in this wide world of ours. A "chance ehild," with a black veil over all her history previous to the day when the "writer," Duncan Gair, put her, a two-year-old baby, into the charge of worthy Miss Vass, with such sum of money as paid a little more than her expenses, but was not to be mentioned beside the value of the sterling godly up-bringing that she received.

Miss Vass had been a scrupulous and a proud woman, with the pride of a race of decent farmers; and she had taken two days of consideration before she had written her consent to Mr. Gair's letter, inquiring whether she would undertake the control of the worse than orphan baby. The payment for so pleasant and womanly a duty

was a sore temptation to her pinched table and thinning wardrobe, and her yearning elinging to the town and home of her birth. But, welcome as the money might be, Elspeth Vass was not the woman to do for its sake what she would not have done without it. She had referred to many good books and to sundry portions of Scripture, and had wrestled long in prayer. Elspeth was not one to display her mental processes, except as they involuntarily showed in the few dry sentences of her tardy reply:—

“That, seeing what was done could not be undone, and that the Lord had expressly declared that he himself would not hold a child responsible for its parents’ evil ways, unless it followed in the same, she did not see that it would be inconsistent with her duty as a Christian woman to undertake to do her best to direct the bairn to better paths.”

She had added, “though it was overlike to be ill guided by its hereditary nature, if there was any truth in birth or breed,” but under the double reflection that Ezekiel says nothing on that point, and that it was a queerlike thing for a single woman to write to a bachelor, she had drawn her pen through those lines, and fair-copied the letter without them.

It was no fairy child, of high-born grace and lustrous beauty, that Elspeth Vass took from the arms of Mr. Gair’s old housekeeper. Just a thin-faced child, with gray eyes and light brown hair, coarsely dressed in a thick woolsey, with no mother’s pride wrought into braiding or frilling.

“I didna think I could tak sae kindly to ony wean in

my auld age," said the Lowland housekeeper. "It's no in me to be unkind to a bairn, God forbid! but I've just passed them by like. An' she's no bonny, and she's backward wi' her tongue. Master says that that failin' will be worth a tocher to her if she keeps it when she's grown. It's the way men talk, Miss Vass, wantin' to have all the crackin' to themselves, and us to mix the toddy to help them on. But if mony a ane canna help frae lovin' au auld dumb dog, that was never a beauty at his best, just because he loves them, what for am I a fule to be taken wi' a wean that tuk to me? She has a kind o' way as if she was thankful for little things that maist bairns take as their right. Ye'll hae an easy handfu' o' her, Miss Vass."

Miss Vass was rather doubtful. She could not forget the child's parentage; and, being accustomed to walk safe paths of antecedent and precedent, she was not sanguine enough to hope that she might have come across that exception which proves the rule. But with all her rigid strictness, she was not a prejudiced woman; and when the little girl showed herself gentle and docile, her kind old heart opened readily to her, though her strong principle never neglected to apply the wholesome discipline which her womanly consciousness taught her was most likely to check any dangerous tendencies in this hopeful shoot of a tainted tree. Mary was brought up in habits of punctuality and unremitting industry, of self-denial and self-control. Miss Vass watched carefully over the subtle moral influences of conversation and general reading, even surrendering her national laxity of judgment upon Mary Queen of Scots; and to satisfy

the girlish yearning for a heroine of beauty, love, and pathos, supplied her place with the image and story of sweet, pure Magdalen of France.

And so, for full fourteen years, the young girl lived with the old woman in the little old-fashioned house, the only home they had either of them ever known. And truly happy had those fourteen years been, albeit their quiet calendar of steady plodding in the common day-school, little household duty, and diligent evening needle-work had been enlivened by no red-letter days more startling than a drive to Strathpeffer, a tea-drinking at the manse, or a day's trip to Inverness.

Mary had grown up a healthy-looking, well-mannered girl, useful about the house, and clever at her needle, but with no more prettiness than good habits, good temper, and superfine neatness are sure to produce. As was only natural, Miss Vass had occasionally certain private cogitations. Mr. Gair had said not a word about her ward's parents, beyond the simple fact that they and their child were no credit to each other. She did not know which of them supplied the funds the lawyer doled out. She could not form the slightest idea of their respective positions in life, nor whether Mary was far from the scene of her birth, or unsuspectingly near it. Like the wise woman that she was, she reflected that if she could not repress these wandering wonderments, much less could the child, so much more immediately interested. Therefore she resolved that no unwholesome mysteries should surround the secret, like ghouls about a corpse. There it was, a sad and serious truth, to be recognized, and solemnly covered up, without prurient

peep or touch. So when Mary was a lassie just entering her teens, Miss Vass did not repress her timid hints, but met them boldly and truthfully, as she would had it been a story of death instead of disgrace. Truthfully, tenderly in utter truthfulness, she answered the questions with which Mary sought to probe the world's ways about such matters, offering no insulting pity or weakening consolation. It pained her — pained her honest, virtuous heart, doubtless, far more than bitterer things had pained poor Mary's mother's — to see the child, spiritually the child of her own soul, go about her daily duties with a graver face and a lower voice than before. But she took no notice. Only once when Mary was sewing, with a thoughtful face and an occasional sigh, Miss Vass ventured to say, with a dramatic imitation of lightness, whose success astonished herself, —

“A penny for your thoughts, Mary, bairn.”

“I was thinking,” said candid Mary, “of a fable that our master read to us once at dictation class. How there was a man doomed by a wicked spirit to wander, without a friend or a penny, through a desert country. But the man was attended by a good genius, and wherever he came the good genius provided him with friends and home, and found money for him, and dug wells for him, and made trees grow over his path. But then we know there are no genii, after all.” And the fingers resumed the sewing, and there came another sigh.

“My child Mary,” said Miss Vass, laying her thin, pale hand on the girl's warm shoulder, “there is God. Need you turn to these poor fables, — though I own they are pretty enough, — while you have the true

historics of Joseph, and David, and Esther? Let the ancient heathen that were born in the dark, and the modern heathen that choose it, talk in riddles about fairy and genii, fortune and luck. Let us call him by the name he taught us, — God our Father. Our Father, Mary, bairn! Let us trust him, Mary. He never asks us to trust him till we have proved him. The youngest beggar-child, before it can know the want of bread, has been fed a deal more than starved. Need you wish for genii, bairn? Does not the angel of the Lord encamp about them that fear him, and deliver them? He turneth the wilderness into a standing water, and dry ground into water-springs. Mary, bairn, the earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof; and if we are his, then he and his are ours. Trust in the Lord and do good, so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed, — body and soul, bairn, heart and head."

That night Mary had kissed Miss Vass with a warmth that showed she had received her heartening words in all their underscore of emphasis. And the good old maid had lain awake some little time thinking of the girl and her future. The hints about this she had conveyed to Mr. Duncan Gair had elicited nothing but the reply that Mary would be expected ultimately to depend upon herself, and that he was sure she had been so reared that she would find it easy. With a prayer for the lassie's well-being, temporal and eternal, she had fallen asleep, to be awakened by the sunbeams, and Mary's voice a-lilting blithe as ever, — and it was nothing but blithe.

Miss Vass was one of those women who sit well in the saddle of life till the last, and die quickly, before

their foot is out of the stirrup. She was only ailing for a day or two before she died, and was even up and dressed—in her afternoon dress, too, lace cap, point collar, and pearl brooch—when death came. She had not broken her habits for him. It was the woman's version of the royal spirit that takes a sick man to the battle-field, to drop dead of disease before the bullet can reach him; that gives the dying captain voice for one more conquering command. It was sense of duty to be done as long as possible, —and once more.

No "last words," so called. Her last words were to give Tibbie Seer, the charwoman (for they kept no servant), some currant scones for a relish with her tea, — "she 'd had a hard day's work, poor body, and did n't look overstrong."

So is it often with the bravest and best. What is death to them, that they should say his litany? Do we stop to cower and tremble before the outside portal of our Father's mansion? Straight on, straight in, with the same step that we always walked. "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?"

It was all over. Tibbie Seer stayed in the house from the death to the funeral, and Mr. Gair came to and fro, and the nephews in Aberdeen wrote to appoint the day of their arrival for the funeral. Mary Dallas lived on, lonely, amid her breaking home; lonely and sad, as the fondest daughter bereaved of the best of mothers, but not duteless, and therefore not comfortless. Miss Vass had left everything arranged, with a kind and righteous arrangement, as became a Christian. Her furniture and the current amount of her little annuity were to be

made over to her nephews. Their father, the husband of Elspeth's only sister, dead long ago, had paid the debts of old Mr. Vass's long illness twenty years before, and had been kind and brotherly to Elspeth in her days of penury. In justice to his children, one sickly and the other married and struggling, she must return them what she could. It was not adequate to the debt she owed their father; and so, thinking of the little great-nephews and nieces, growing from and wearing out so much, she had firmly set aside her natural leaning to the better-provided Mary, and to the money and the furniture she had even added, "and all my wearing apparel." Mr. Gair told Mary this; and in all her grief the girl arose to fold and arrange and pack for the benefit of others. She even went through the little store of lace, carefully repairing the slight decays which negligence would soon reduce to utter worthlessness. It was her last service to her friend, to make her bequests as valuable as possible.

But something there was for Mary's self. The little black-paper profile of Elspeth Vass when a girl. It had its history. It had been procured as a gift for Elspeth's lover, who had immediately after gone away to Edinburgh, and had forgotten the plain, grave woman in the far north, until he remembered to send back her picture and her true, sensible letters on the eve of his marriage with somebody else. It was no secret in Dingwall; for, against Elspeth's wish, he had been inclined to parade their engagement before he left for Edinburgh. But she did not make a moan, nor run away, but took his ring from her hand, and stopped working at her homely *trousseau* and household replenishing. She wore out the first,

piece by piece, as she needed it, and used the other to brighten her old-maiden abode. Sorely, sorely did the false lover misunderstand this brave and sound nature ; but she was avenged in the galling sincerity which crept into his self-comforting formula, “ that she had never really cared for him, being worthy of some one far better.” Also the little pearl brooch, and the silk-bound, embroidered album, wherein Miss Vass had stored the quaint, queer bits of literature and art which had crossed her own humble by-path, — the striking metaphor remembered from the Sabbath sermon, the verses written by local talent upon local interests in the local journal, the flower-painting on rice-paper bought at the laird’s lady’s stall in the charity bazaar, even one or two caricatures by that clever lad Bob Rose, who went to London, and got some of his things into Punch, and died young.

All these for Mary Dallas, quietly described as “ my dear and dutiful pupil.” Little things truly, scarcely worth so much as the oldest household thing that was to go to the strange nephews, but precious to Mary, with a preciousness beyond the highest commercial value, — something that could not be bought ; the visible traces of a good, true life that had lovingly mingled with her own. The thought of them, and of all that they suggested, lay at the girl’s sad heart, like the pure guardian snow round the patient flowers in winter, while Mr. Gair told her that she was now to be sent to London, to live with and assist a widow lady, who was starting a boarding-school in the suburbs ; and explained that her allowance of twenty pounds per annum (just half what it had hitherto been) would cease entirely

when she came of age. Mary was to go first to Edinburgh, and rest a day and a night with his old housekeeper's sister, and then she was to go on to London, where his own brother, a solicitor in Gray's Inn, had engaged to send a responsible person to meet her at the railway station, and conduct her to her destination.

Mr. Gair was not an unkindly man, though his old housekeeper described him as "ane o' thae canny bodies, that hae lookit theirselves up sac safely, that they dinna ken whaur to find their ain key"; and there was in his manner to Mary much of that sort of careful consideration with which we provide for the transit of a valuable and fragile parcel. But Mary did not notice this, thinking so much of the precious portrait and jewel and book that bore their testimony to so much more. In a sort of unconscious, natural way, she felt that what we have once had we can never lose, except by our own will. And she thanked Mr. Gair so warmly, that he elapped an extra padlock on his heart, in self-defence, lest she should find the missing key, and enter the castle by storm! And then she went away and packed her three treasures in the safest corner of her old hair-trunk.

An iron-gray, taciturn man was Mary's custodian from King's Cross to her final destination. There was but little of the beauty or majesty of London to be seen in the shortest cut from the New Road to Brixton. And Mary's heart sunk within her at the sight of one dreary street after another, all sordid with dirt and bad weather, and filled with a density of squalor and wretchedness new to the Highland-bred girl. Gradually, however, the

roads widened, the houses looked more like homes, and trees and shrubs, albeit in their wintry nakedness, broke and beautified the grim lines of brick and mortar, like pleasant fancies amid stern facts. "It improves towards the end," thought Mary, hopefully.

Alas! Presently the cab turned off the main road, and struck into a purlieu of new-built villas, duly stuccoed, and standing close together, two thirds of them with a great white mark upon their windows, to proclaim that the desirable family residence was still untenanted; while all the rest had that painful, cheap newness about the window drape and visible furniture that suggests households built on sand, and the constant presence of the broker's man. No tiniest patch of green before the houses. No distinction between road and footpath, — both in miserable equality of stone and dust and slush. No foot-passengers, — and that seemed no wonder, — and one or two tradesmen's carts prowling about to pick up new customers, only to be served, however, on the strictest ready-money system.

It was in the heart of this wilderness that the cab stopped. Before a villa exactly like hundreds round it, both in its building and its furnishing, individual only in the little brass plate, engraved, "Establishment for Young Ladies."

Mary's escort stayed with her until he saw her and her poor belongings safely into the hands of Mrs. Lambert, described on her own circulars as the "lady superintendent" of the establishment. Mrs. Lambert led Mary up stairs, volubly informing her that the house was very quiet just now, and the "dormitory" in fact empty, since "term" would not begin till next week. Mrs.

Lambert knew that "term" would bring at least one day-pupil, — the builder's daughter, — and one boarder, — the child of a widowed Italian artist, who was engaged to teach his language or his art, should any young ladies require either, which understanding had enabled Mrs. Lambert's prospectus to boast of "the services of Signor Barti." Others would surely turn up. Mrs. Lambert argued from innate consciousness that many people put off things to the last moment; and having sown her circulars broadcast, with "term-time" duly notified, she was now diligently touching up her silk dress for that momentous day, before which she would surely have many inquiring callers.

Poor Mrs. Lambert! Her deceased husband had been a struggling man, lacking robustness in health, education, and character. In her own bedroom she had a drawerful of the prospectuses of different defunct companies which he had served as secretary, together with divers specimens of the ores and minerals whereon they had founded schemes of golden wealth, — sad relics of a married life which began in sentiment and ended in a weary shuffle. A strong, good nature would have been sainted in the trials she had passed through; a weak one like hers was merely soured and spoilt. A faded, shifty, and shiftless woman, she stood before Mary Dallas, with the Scotch breezes still cool on her fresh cheek, and the bracing teaching of Elspeth Vass still girding up her soul.

"Perhaps you will not mind my leaving you for the present," Mrs. Lambert said. "As soon as you have arranged your little matters as far as you need, you can go down to the drawing-room, and I will join you there

by and by. You will quite understand that I am very much occupied, — new house, new school, and my own two dear, fatherless boys, and a most useless servant, Miss Dallas; and I'm afraid it is against me that I have not been long used to such a state of things."

Mary readily excused her; and after opening her box and correcting the deficiencies of her travelling toilet, she only repaired to "the drawing-room," where, during an hour of solitude, the coarse drugget with the Brns-sels-like pattern, the hired piano, the vases on the mantel-piece (with price-tickets still sticking on), the red and blue volumes, ornoln inkstand, and heap of circulars on the table, all became as drearily familiar to her as long-known faces that have never worn a friendly smile. At last, however, a latch-key rattled roughly into the street-door, and there were noisy steps about the passage and lower stairs, and presently a dirty serving-girl summoned Mary to dinner.

The meal was served in the chamber behind the drawing-room, a narrow apartment looking out into the cramped yard. It introduced Mary to the whole of the Lambert family, — shock-headed, shy, uncouth William, a year or two younger than herself, and pale, peevish, cripple Jemmy, of not more than eight or nine. Also it revealed the whole spirit of the scrambling, ill-managed household, where the mistress scolded the maid for delinquencies due half to her own want of foresight and half to the deficiency of the domestic machinery, and the maid snlked, until goaded to answer back; where the boys handed no dish till it was asked for, and partook of what was offered them without any thanks, — Mrs.

Lambert's "manners" being an acquirement, and not a growth, and reserved, like her music and French, for the sphere of school-fees.

There were no regular duties for Mary yet. So when Mrs. Lambert disappeared again to her dress-making work in her bedroom, and William went off with a noisy slam of the street-door (he had a situation at a library and stationery depot not far off), and little Jemmy hobbled back to his corner of the bony old sofa, Mary went up stairs and brought two or three old ciphering-books, in which she had pasted any little picture or poem that had come in her way. Nothing choice, — for those were scarce, and had gone into Miss Vass's album, which Mary was not equal to looking through yet, — but cuttings from stray penny-papers; ay, sometimes after they had come as wrappers from the market. But for the poor little cripple, left with idle head and hands, they would be as much a treat as a picture-gallery.

So they were. Jemmy was no engaging child: he had all the repelling faults of neglected deformity, — a spiritual attitude of helpless but malevolent self-defence, a greedy claiming and ignoring of unaccustomed kindness. All this Mary found out over her picture-books, in the first afternoon of their acquaintanceship. But she would not see it; she assumed that divine blindness to evil which is the best ground from which to combat it. Or, at any rate, she called it by different names, — names that would attract all her sympathies instead of repelling them, shyness instead of moroseness, sheer suffering, and solitude.

His childhood and affliction made him the most ap-

proachable of the little circle, which was sufficiently unsympathetic to make her presently thankful even for his ungracious attachment. Had Mary been of unadaptable material, her orderly, systematic training would have been but as a stone about her neck to swamp her in this morass of incapability and confusion. But Mary had that true soul of order which does not spurn chaos. She had been trained not to put tangled skeins out of sight, but to unravel them. A stranger and a subordinate in this house, she could not fix hours and frame regulations; and during her first experience of this disorder and irregularity she had hard work to keep any hold of her straying duties. But gradually she seized the very innermost secret of order and method, which consists in doing the right thing at the right season, instead of the wrong thing at an appointed time.

The more people need a right influence, the slower they are to recognize it. Mrs. Lambert began to congratulate herself that her household and her school went more easily than she had anticipated, and to take pride in her superior management. Jemmy accepted all Mary's little schemes of interest and amusement, and was perhaps too ecstatically grateful for the shilling paint-box that she bought him to think of thanks; while William was sullenly content to find his old grievance, the unpunctuality of meals, gradually fading away. The little foreign boarder whispered to the day-pupils such pleasant rumors of interesting stories and merry games, that when a certain mother fell into a lingering illness, her three little girls were instantly placed with Mrs. Lambert. Nor did a suspicion of the main-spring of all cross

that lady's mind, even when, after one half-holiday's up-braiding and final "notiee" to her overworked servant, that aggrieved damsel retorted that "she 'd ha' been off of her own aceord long ago, if it had n't been for Miss Dallas, who did n't go on the rampage and mix up what you eould help and what you eould n't."

It was a godless household. There was a form of religion, to be sure, but it, too, was something to set in the aecount of the school-fees. Mrs. Lambert kept sittings in the nearest ehureh, and taught her pupils the Catechism, and kept a form of morning and evening prayer on the sehool-room mantel-shelf. But the spirit of Christianity did not show in the morals or manners of the plaee. And Mrs Lambert's false standards and wrong-headed maxims were none the less pernicious because they entered ears too young and ignorant to deteet their inconsisteney and grossness. A soul may be poisoned, as well as a constitution spoiled, by unfit food in infaney. But Mary was in greater danger than any of the others, for standing on a footing less of pupilage and more of equality, and also slowly winning the good graces of the priniepal, that priniepal took it upon herself as a kindly duty to hold forth to the friendless girl upon beauty, dress, and possible ehanees and prospeets in life. Nobody but those who know by experience (and all may who keep their ears and minds open) ean understand how rotten is the morality and how false the virtue of merely respectable and genteel women. Not worse than the other sex, — surely, surely not! But only too ready to be as bad mentally, — to prostitute their minds to the level of the other's aetual vice, and to stop short merely

where the bargain grows too speculative. If their unhappy confidants cross that line, and play a losing game, — “ Well, well, well, — and after all their virtuous conversation ! They never before believed in such iniquity existing in the world ! No, indeed. As for Cleopatra, and Fair Rosamond, and Mary of Scotland, they were queens, and great beauties, and altogether quite different from this little common creature, — pah, drop the subject, and never resume it again, if you please ! ”

But God’s ways are not man’s ways. He makes the hour of danger the opportunity for salvation. Mary Dallas dated her spiritual birth from the days of her residence in that moral desert. There it was that God’s Spirit quickened the good seed faithfully planted by Elspeth Vass. Like most well-trained children, Mary could not remember when she had not had thoughts of God and religion, and aspirations after goodness and heaven. But the veil of the Temple had not been raised, — she had never entered the Holiest of Holies. She could not fix the day when the Secret of the Lord was revealed to her ; she only knew that in her spiritual isolation Christ became more than a sweet ideal, a high Example, — became Saviour, Guide, Brother, Friend, and All in all. From conscientious duties, prayer and Scripture-study became delights never to be foregone, or even needlessly curtailed. Communion with God became a comfort as real as might have been communion with her dear old protectress, and far higher, lifted beyond all possibilities of frailty, change, or death. Even towards the aliens around her she felt a tie which they knew not of. Her divine Brother was theirs also, and she only loved them

with a more pitiful tenderness because they did not know to rejoice in the sweet relationship. Years and years after, when she had no more cause to lament a decay in religion than has the sober wife in the golden wedding to regret the shy ecstasy of the bridal morn, she would yet look back fondly on the bright days of her first love, when the barren dormitory was as the gate of heaven, and God's voice pealed through the very commonplace sermons in the parish church.

So she lived, useful, active, self-denying, and liked. Liking, and that a very selfish liking, seemed the fairest growth possible to the shallow hearts around her. Mary had no time to think about that. It is not those who best deserve love who find time to sit down and talk about wasted affection. Mary had always eaten the crab-apples in Miss Vass's garden with a contented spirit; but who so pleased as she when the minister's wife sent them the gift of a box of peaches? She did not heed the lack of love till she found it, and then she rejoiced with an exceeding great joy.

It arose out of Miss Vass's album and Jemmy's paint-box, and it came about on this wise. One day when he had been very, very ill, Mary had produced her treasure for his amusement, sure that Elspeth would have said it could not have had a better use. She had left it in his room overnight, for he woke early, and worried his brother by his uneasy restlessness. He was confined to his bed just at that time, and Mary did not find opportunity to visit him until about noon on the following day. There she found him propped among his pillows, wrapped in a dirty red shawl, diligently daubing away at Elspeth's

own prim little sketch of Inverness Castle, the only specimen of her handiwork which had been deemed worthy of the book. To snatch it away was only to see its hopeless disfigurement, and to drop it in disgust and anguish. Mary sat down at the foot of the bed and wept bitterly.

Presently a little figure came crawling towards her, and long, cold, bony fingers tried to draw her hands from her face. Mary still wept on. Presently the little figure began to heave, and a sobbing wail broke forth, "I wanted to please you, Miss Dallas. I thought I would make it look so much nicer; and I did think it looked nicer," with the sobbing sigh of a disappointment as great as any artist's over his rejected picture.

Mary roused herself with a womanly recollection that the room was too chilly for the half-dressed child, and she tried to put him back into his bed again, but he clung about her neck. "Don't be angry with me, Miss Dallas. Don't say you 'll never be good to me any more. You have been so good to me. O Miss Dallas, won't you forgive me? — forgive me!"

Mary stopped her own tears to quiet him, and though she had not much voice to trust, one or two reassuring kisses coaxed him down upon his pillow, still clinging to her arms and crying, "Forgive me, forgive me! I didn't mean to make you so sorry; I didn't, really! I thought my painting was so pretty!"

"Darling, darling," said Mary, with her quivering lips, "if you could have painted it as well as that Michael Angelo I read about to you last week I should have been just as sorry, for it was drawn by my dear Miss Elspeth, and I so loved her that the way she left it seemed to me

to be better than any other way. But I know you did n't mean any harm, and my dear good Miss Elspeth would have been sorry that my love for her should make me angry with anybody else."

"O, I wish I could put it baek again!" sobbed Jemmy, "for I do love you so dearly, Miss Dallas, and I wish you would love me as you did Miss Elspeth. Mamma always ealls me her poor afflicted ehild; and when I asked her if people would love me, she used to say that if I was good most people would pity and be kind to me. But I want to be loved as if I was n't lame and humpy, not beecause I am."

"My darling, my darling!" said Mary, "you've seen how I grieved over dear Miss Eppie's drawing, though it was n't very grand; but just beecause it was hers, it was worth more to me than the finest picture in the queen's gallery. And so I love you, Jemmy, just beecause you are yourself. I would n't wish you to be any way different, — unless a little stronger, for your own sake; and that, please God, you'll soon grow, Jemmy."

But that he never did. From that day heneeforth these two belonged to each other as no others there belonged. Duties are apt to find their way to the fittest hands, and Mrs. Lambert soon left in Mary's echarge all those little ministrations which a mother should grudge to anybody but herself. Slowly and reluetantly, Mary became aware of an ever-increasing weakness and deformity in her little echarge, and presently found it her duty to mention this to the mother. With all the ejaenlatory grief which is so thrilling and so ehcap, Mrs. Lambert bewailed her poor martyred one, for whom her empty

purse could procure no scientific aid. Vehemently did she put aside the few sovereigns which Mary offered from her own little hoard, until the kind girl humiliated herself into the very humblest persuasions, when she suddenly became mollified and acquiescent. So it was Mary who paid the fee, which seemed so heavy, for the great surgeon's few doubtful and indeterminate words, and it was Mary who bought the sundry surgical appliances which he vaguely suggested as possible benefit. It was Mary, too, who now and again hired a little hand-chair, to take Jemmy for an airing in the cool of the summer days. She bought no new dress that season, and her last year's straw bonnet was only cleaned and altered. "Missis don't go for to deny herself anything, miss," said the then reigning servant-girl, another strong partisan of Mary's; "and if people's own flesh and blood don't put themselves about for 'em, why should you, that ain't no ways belonging? But don't ery, miss, for you 've a right to do what you like with your own, if anybody has." And Mary held on her path of loving sacrifice.

It was something to see the little, pale, thin face, paler and thinner every day, brighten whenever she approached. It was something to mark the patience which her love and counsel had substituted for peevishness. It was something to see Jemmy, soothing her in his turn, echoing back to her own heart the sweet truths she had taught him, — how Jesus loved him, yes, even more than she did, and how he was going to Jesus. She did not want, and she did not receive, any gratitude from Mrs. Lambert, who took everything as a matter of course. But it was something to find that William warmed

towards her in his rough, curt way, and sometimes even shyly joined in the cheerful evenings that she spent at his little brother's bedside. The boarders missed her sadly out of school-hours, but the little Italian, now growing a tall girl of fourteen, delighted to act as her deputy, and Mary herself walked in and out among them, generally with some stimulating suggestion, and always with a pleasant word and smile.

The end came at last. Came slowly, O, so slowly, that the few neighbors who had lived opposite them long enough to know anything about them looked daily to see if the blinds were down yet. The school was suspended, as it was thought, on the eve of death, but the faint, failing life flickered on for a week after that. But the end came at last.

Sight dimming in the shadow of death, ears muffled under his touch, and the deformed expression passing from the poor wan face, and suggesting something of how that angel would look, who would be but little James Lambert made perfect and glorified. Heaven was close to him now; it was nearer to him than the bony old sofa or the little paint-box. He had pondered out its beatitudes, as we strive to imagine a new home in our near future. Every now and then the conclusions of his simple logic came in questions that made Mary's heart leap within her.

"I may see your Miss Elspeth, may n't I, Mary?"

"Perhaps. Just as the Bible tells us we shall see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob."

"I wonder how I could know her! If she knew you loved me, she might like me, too. I don't even remem-

ber papa." Something of the loneliness of the Valley of the Shadow was paining even the simple child's trustfulness.

"Everybody will love you, there, darling. Jesus is there, remember; and he loves you, and knows exactly what you will want to make you happy."

"Take hold of my hand, Mary. I am so sorry for that picture I spoilt; but you did forgive me, did n't you? I wonder I'm not more sorry to leave you. But I have been so very tired. And poor mamma, too!" added the considerate tenderness which God had taught his little one before he called him to himself.

Put down the little hand. Cover the face which now beholds our Father which is in heaven.

"Miss Mary, — miss, dear, — don't take on so. Them that keeps in their tears always has a dreadful burst out at last. I'm sure you've been as good to him as ever you could be, and you ain't got nothing to repent. The missis, she's grizzled a bit reg'lar this long time, specially over bein' put out of her way, and now she's down stairs comfortin' herself with that jelly that was sent over for pore Master James, — and bother my silly tongue, miss, I did n't mean to say it if it hurts you! Only I don't see why you should be a breaking your good heart, — you that does n't belong to him."

But Mary wept on.

Nigh two thousand years ago, One who knew all the secrets of humanity asked this question: "Which of these, thinkest thou, was neighbor unto him that fell among thieves?" And the answer came: "He that showed mercy on him."

It was not very long after little Jemmy's death that Mary Dallas received from Mr. Gair, with her yearly remittance, a notification that it ceased henceforth. She made an arrangement to remain with Mrs. Lambert on payment of a sum of equal value with her former allowance; but when it fell due, Mrs. Lambert was short of money, and it stood over for a while, and when at last it was paid, it was presently borrowed back again, until it was established as a sort of running loan between the two, and Mary fell into a daughterly habit of just asking for such sums as she needed for her modest requirements.

Time rolled on. The stucco blistered and fell in the wilderness of villas, and their rapidly successive tenants grew shabbier and shiftier. But the school was kept open somehow. Every term changed almost all the day-pupils; and it was really rather trying to Mary's emotions to be constantly required to bind up hearts that were breaking at parting from her.

Of the household, Mademoiselle Barti, orphaned by the death of her unprofitable opium-eating father, still remained, teaching what he had once taught. She might have earned more elsewhere, but she clung to Mary, who took care that her position was more remunerative than her own, by stoutly withstanding all delays or encroachments upon her salary, and by finding leisure for her to give lessons out of doors. But William went away, — went off to try his luck in America. Of course his mother resisted his going, sourly and excitedly, with every painful suggestion and sentimental foreboding, according to the fashion of selfish women whenever their

indolent wills are stroked the wrong way. It took all Mary's skilful management and soothing influence to let the lad go away in peace and good-will, instead of in wrath and defiance. Her kind wishes were stitched into almost every garment of his little outfit. And when Mrs. Lambert found herself chronically disinclined to letter-writing about American mail-time, Mary took up the slighted correspondence, and never less than once a month did the exile receive a closely covered sheet from home.

Just one of those simple, neighborly kindnesses that cost time and trouble, while too humble and commonplace to return any remuneration of self-gratulation and vainglory. Even William Lambert himself did not fully trace out the influence under which, when sorely tempted to enter a New York dancing-den, he turned away with a twinging recollection that to-morrow was the day which generally brought the kind, innocent letter from England.

And so the years passed by: not slowly or wearily. Time never passes so swiftly as in pleasant monotony. Events, and not years, weary us into old age. But it is not everybody who can make monotony pleasant; and then the decay of rust is worse than wear. An appetite must be healthy to enjoy plain food, and a nature must be sound to thrive on small interests. Small interests, indeed! Those young ladies who need the excitement of two cross love-affairs, — both clandestine, — a ball that does not begin till midnight, and a sensational novel every day from the circulating library, must think the interest very small which can be derived from constant occupation, the contrivances for our own bonnets, little

loving notes from some of our removed pupils, letters *pro bono publico* from New York, and snug evening readings of Walter Scott, Miss Austen, and our good mouthy periodical, with our adopted sister, Clara Barti. But what do the angels think? And which would sensible people prefer, — the mustard without the meat, or the meat without the mustard? And, geuerally speaking, that is the choice which we have to make.

What is there further to say about Mary Dallas from the time she came of age until she was thirty-two? All that time the history of her soul was written in characters too minute to show ou any page but the pure scroll of a heavenly record. Was it uot a waste of the “best years of her life,” do you ask? Mary Dallas’s life, lived in the strengthening atmosphere of that simple faith which holds,

“That the happiest year we know
Is the last which leads us home,”

ignored all such phrases. The duties and trials and blessings of each day seemed enough for her, and in them these “best years” were “wasted,” in the opinion of those who hold them to be profitably employed only in those pitiful arts of husband-hunting, which secure either failure in endeavor or sorer failnre in success.

Did Mary uever think of love and marriage? Truly, she did, and most modern girls would have laughed her high ideals to scorn. Happy and occupied, safe from that *ennui* which is the real bane of single life, she was quite ready to admit that a true marriage is the completion of womanly happiness. She would be happier married, she quietly believed, — (O, how she would love

and labor then!) — but she was happy enough as she was. If God willed this blessing to her, well and good; if he did not, well and good still. “No good thing will he withhold from them that love him.”

What a strange peace would fall on London drawing-rooms and country coteries if such doctrines entered there!

Older and wiser now, with insight beyond the superficialities of life, Mary Dallas often gave a silent thought to her unknown father and mother. In that sorrowful matter it was no longer of herself, but of them, that she thought. Were they living yet? Were they repentant of their sin, or only jealously cautious of detection? Did they — either of them — ever remember and long for their unknown child? Once, when this feeling was strong upon her, the plain, practical woman wrote a letter of inquiry to Mr. Gair in Dingwall. No answer came for weeks, making Mary feel that the prompt business-like “writer” sought instructions before he replied. But the answer came at last, short and stern, yet with a turn in the wording as if the old man involuntarily wished to disclaim responsibility for its civil harshness. “He could appreciate her feelings, but she must remember that he was not at liberty to violate professional secrets. Also, though he was sure her letter had been dictated only by feelings that did her great honor, yet it became his duty to remind her that all interest in her ended at her majority, and that she must acknowledge that full justice had been done to her unfortunate position by the superior breeding and education to which she certainly did credit.”

It was a cruel blow to poor Mary, buoyed up with hope, and the cruellest part was, that she instinctively felt that the cold closing warning came direct from the fountain-head of father or mother, — too selfishly fearful of man's detection to be sincerely desirous of God's forgiveness. But she bore it bravely enough, did her work as well as ever, walked out with her pupils up Brixton Hill, and went to week-night service in the evening, where a stranger preached from the text, "Call no man your father upon the earth; for one is your Father, which is in heaven."

She took it as a heavenly message to compensate for the cruel earthly one, — a fresh water-spring in the parched wilderness. And she went home and prayed for her parents, that one strong prayer which remains to weakest, farthest, most helpless love, "Take them in thy hand, O my Father, and as thou knowest now, so deal well with them!"

So she lived from her twenty-first to her thirty-second year. That period became a date in her life, because William Lambert returned. He had been a slight, pale, rather rubbish-looking youth when she had "seen him off," with a warm grasp of the hand, twelve years before; but it was a stalwart, brown, bearded man who came to the door at ten o'clock one summer night, and, asking hurriedly "if this was not Mrs. Lambert's," caught Mary's hand and kissed her brow before she could answer him.

O, those were merry days! It was midsummer holiday, and there was nothing to do but gratify all the good-humored whims and wishes of the welcome guest. Now

a morning spent in the West End of London, which had never grown too familiar to Mary to seem other than an enchanted fairy-land; now a picture-gallery, now a concert, now a long day in the sylvan glades of Richmond or Kew. They all went, — and they all enjoyed themselves: Mary had no special share beyond packing the picnic-basket, and keeping the time-table. It was just life struck on the sweet chords of leisure and friendship, — and competence, — for William had prospered, and they did not need to reckon the railway fares, or to weary themselves for want of a fly. How good Mary found it! And she never troubled herself to wonder why some other lives were set to that tune from beginning to end. Wise-hearted Mary knew that it is better to come to pleasure with a good appetite than to drink its sweet cup till it pall.

William Lambert was to return to America, but not for a year, and after the first wild ecstasies of reunion and rehabilitation, he settled down for the mean time in the home among the grimy villas, only changing it by the hiring of another servant, and airing it by a current of wider and freer social life.

But they had not all lived together more than two or three months, when Mary Dallas foresaw what was going to happen.

That William Lambert would not go back by himself. That Clara Barti would not wish to stay behind him. They would take Mrs. Lambert with them, — and she would be left alone.

Mary Dallas was human, and she wept in the solitude of her chamber. But she was Christian, too, and heroic,

and she dashed the tears away, and confessed her selfishness on her knees before God, and asked for help to be happy in her friends' happiness.

So, walking bravely on in that path of loving duty, it seemed to grow smooth beneath her feet. No maudlin expressions of sentimental self-sacrifice, no sense of injury ever rose from her lips to cloud the lovers' sunshine. "If I am not to live in the pearl palace myself," she thought, cheerfully using the imagery of a favorite nursery story, "at least I can be the good fairy who keeps it bright for the knight and the princess."

And there she had her direct reward. All virtues and vices are repaid in their own coin: only some have long credit; but this came in ready money.

William and Clara were more to each other than she could have ever been to either, but neither was less to her than they had ever been. Nay, rather more. There were times and seasons when they had a lover-like preference for dual solitude; but the innocent alacrity with which she left them to themselves made them pleasantly welcome the cheerful readiness with which she always returned to them. Clara was jealously kind and considerate to make her own new happiness rather increase than diminish her adopted sister's, and under this fresh softening influence William's esteem developed into all sorts of affectionate attention.

When the year of William's English sojourn waned toward its close, practical arrangements came into the love-affair. Practical questions are to love what bridges are to a river, — they may either add use to beauty, or

destroy beauty forever. Unfortunately, outward influences generally tend to the latter result, and most lovers have to keep their happiness in spite of their surroundings, rather than with their assistance. Happy are those who have one such friend as Mary, ready to discuss the ways and means for a household across the ocean, without any discontented murmur for the vanished hope of some nearer home, where she could act maiden-aunt, name-mother, and all the other sweet little prerogatives which single life gathers from married happiness.

Naturally enough, the first proposal was, that Mrs. Lambert should accompany her son and his wife to their new home. But against that she resolutely set her face. Life had nothing remaining for her now, she whined, yet at any rate she would lay her bones in her own country. Then would she like to stay in the same house, and keep on the school, receiving from her son (who knew nothing of the unsatisfactory state of Mary's salary for the last ten years) such allowance as would render her independent of change or misfortune? This suggestion she consented to take into consideration, and kept it there until very late in the marriage preparations, when she suddenly informed Mary that, availing herself of such allowance, she should remove herself and her furniture to her native town of Rutland, and share house with one of her early cronies still residing there. Mary heard her out with bright attention, and assenting to all her repining provisions for her own comfort and enjoyment, only made one proposition, that the widow should not name this new scheme to her son until Mary should speak about it again, which she.

promised to do in a few days. For Mary knew that Clara's sensitive nerves were already too highly wrought under the sense of a breaking past and a strange future, and that William had cares enough without any needless burden from others' whims and necessities, and that both would be morbidly conscious of any inconvenience or suffering that the course of their lives chanced to inflict upon others. They should know nothing about this measure, which threw her out, homeless, to begin life anew, until she had, at least in some measure, settled herself in some remunerative position.

And before a week was over, she herself cheerfully unfolded the plan to William, making as though it was the very best thing that could have happened to all parties, since she had secured the post of matron in a small home for orphan boys. Just what she had often longed for, she said. She had loved all her old pupils very dearly; but then they had their own fathers and mothers to care for them. These she would have all to herself, to train and to care for, in health and in sickness; and then both William and she simultaneously thought of Jemmy, dead so long ago, and tears came into Mary's eyes, and William softly shook her hand, and told her she would be the right woman in the right place.

Then followed the wedding, and the last long farewells. Mary was the universal helper and good angel, keeping even Mrs. Lambert up to as high a mark of cheerfulness and complacency as she dared set for that lady's temper, — acting as William's right hand and Clara's stronghold. The worst of it was, she was so

good, that they missed her almost too sorely when they were out on the Atlantic together. But William, a man, determined not to break down where a woman had kept up, and Clara dashed away her tears, knowing that Mary herself would bid her to smile for William's sake.

O, blessed are the influences that bind us to our noblest selves!

Years and years. The scene is changed from the grimy wilderness of villas to a plain country-house, with a simple flower-garden in front, and vegetable beds and orchards behind. There is a hum of young voices coming from what was perhaps once the drawing-room, and numberless little shirts are fluttering from the lines in the drying-ground. There is a brougham before the portico from which a tall, grave gentleman has just alighted. A doctor.

One of the little orphan scholars let him in, and led him (though he knew the way well enough) to a chamber on the first story.

A cheerful room, although the chamber of hopeless sickness. The carpet was bright, and the looped-back curtains were fresh and spotless, and there was a crowd of cheap little photographs hanging over the mantel-piece, and a work-table beside the snowy couch, that was turned towards the glorious landscape of hill and valley that stretched before the open window.

Its back screened its occupant from the opening of the door, nor did the doctor wait to see her before he announced, —

“Good cheer, Miss Dallas! I have brought you the news of your election.”

“God be praised!” said a clear, sweet voice; “only I’m afraid I’ve got before some poor body that needed it more.”

And the doctor drew up his chair to the side of his patient.

Older and thinner, and with the worn look of pain, it was the same peaceful, contented face of Mary Dallas that smiled up from the pillows.

“When you are there,” he said, “you will soon be ever so much better. You see, they can muster every appliance to lighten each special form of weakness or pain. And won’t you have a stall-full of work at the patients’ annual bazaar, and won’t you hold a levee of your orphans, juvenile and adult, on every visitors’ day!”

The physician had quite an affection for this patient woman, whom he had seen in her active labors in the orphan school suddenly succumb to a hopeless form of spinal disease in so advanced a stage that she must have gone through a world of exhausting pain before she made a sign. “Were you right to conceal so much?” he had asked, gravely; and she had answered, earnestly, “I would not, if I had suspected anything. For I know giving the first trouble is often giving the least in the end. But I thought it was too easily borne to be anything serious!”

That was the secret of much in Mary’s life. The brave spirit did not recognize its own superior powers of endurance and thought. Surely the troubles I bear so well cannot be so great as those which weigh others down.

Watching her as she lay, the good doctor saw her eyes wander tenderly round the little room that had been the sanctum of her middle age. Mary was one of those women who grow to love chairs, and tables, and walls. Besides, that room had memories of its own. William and Clara had come there in the only revisit they were ever likely to give to their native land, and as Clara had proudly introduced her two children, William, standing on the hearth-rug, had pointed kindly to the rows of little portraits on the wall, with the quotation, "Thou hast many more children than she which hath an husband."

"You may go in whenever you like," said the doctor, to recall the thoughts that he saw were overbusy; "once a change is to be made, the sooner it is over the better."

"Thank you, I dare say I shall go next week," answered Mary Dallas; "and thank you again, sir, and all my other good friends, whose kindness has found me such a happy home for the rest of my days."

Alas, it was only a place in the Hospital for Incurables!

Six years after! How long are six years when they are passed lying on a couch,—just sometimes carried, couch and all, to another room or to the garden terrace!

There is a sound of weeping in the corridor. One little nurse cannot restrain her sobs, as she tells another that—

"Miss Dallas went off last night. Seeing how pleas-

ant and cheerful she'd always borne her pain, it was strange to see how glad she was to go when it came to the end. It didn't seem anything awesome to her; one would have thought she'd gone that way ten times before, she was that trustful and sure."

"She'll be missed dreadful," responded the other. "She was the only one who ever went in twice to see that old Mrs. Lomas, who certain can't excuse her ill-temper by her affliction, for the cross look had grown on her face long before her trouble came. But Miss Dallas always had her chair stopped at her door, and would sit hours with her till she actually sweetened her up a bit."

"Yes," said Mary's nurse; "and she's wrote on a bit of paper that Mrs. Lomas is to have her canary, and all her books are to go into the house-library, and I'm to have her clothes, and there is some little ornament or other named as a keepsake for each of those young men and women that came to see her regular, — her old orphan scholars. If your great rich men left their hundreds of thousands as just and as kind as she's left her bits of things, the world would be better sorted, I'm thinking. And now I must send to the post. She wrote this letter three days ago, directly the doctor told her what she must expect, and she gave it to me, and told me to send it off directly it was all over. The young lady whose grandma I nursed, before I got the berth in this hospital, hadn't a happier face when she gave me her wedding cards done up ready to be posted directly after her marriage. It's addressed to 'Mr. and Mrs. Lambert, Chestnut Place, Brooklyn, New York.'

That's the people she always wrote to. There'll be sorrow there, I expect, when they get this."

Good by, Mary Dallas, good by. They come in and look at you, with that sweetly surprised smile on your worn face. Old crippled women are carried in on their chairs to see you for the last time, and they sob with the fervor of youth that they cannot be lifted up to kiss your cold cheek over the coffin edge. Some of your orphans come; your kind physician comes. They say to each other that you were a good, true, Christian woman.

Good by, once more, sweet Mary Dallas, with the wondering smile on your parted lips. Did you find more than even your bright faith expected? And did not the King answer and say unto you, "Inasmuch as ye have done kindness unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me"?





A LEAF IN THE STORM.

BY OUIDA.

THE Berceau de Dieu was a little village in the valley of the Seine. As a lark drops its nest amongst the grasses, so a few peasant people had dropped their little farms and cottages amidst the great green woods on the winding river. It was a pretty place, with one steep, stony street, shady with poplars and with elms; quaint houses, about whose thatel a cloud of white and gray pigeons fluttered all day long; a little aged chapel with a conical red roof; and great barns covered with ivy and thick creepers, red and purple, and lichens that were yellow in the sun. All around it were the broad, flowering meadows, with the sleek cattle of Normandy fattening in them, and the sweet dim forests where the young men and maidens went on every holy day and feast-day in the summer-time to seek for wood-anemones, and lilies of the pools, and the wild campanula, and the fresh dog-rose, and all the boughs and grasses that made their house-doors like garden bowers, and seemed to take the cushat's note and the linnet's song into their little temple of God.

The Berceau de Dieu was very old indeed. Meu said that the hamlet had been there in the day of the Virgin of Orléans; and a stone cross of the twelfth century still stood by the great pond of water at the bottom of the street under the chestnut-tree, where the villagers gathered to gossip at sunset when their work was done. It had no city near it, and no town nearer than four leagues. It was in the green care of a pastoral district, thickly wooded and intersected with orchards. Its produce of wheat, and oats, and cheese, and fruit, and eggs was more than sufficient for its simple prosperity. Its people were hardy, kindly, laborious, happy; living round the little gray chapel in amity and good-fellowship. Nothing troubled it. War and rumors of war, revolutions and counter-revolutions, empires and insurrections, military and political questions, — these all were for it things unknown and unheard of, — mighty winds that arose and blew and swept the lands around it, but never came near enough to harm it, lying there, as it did, in its loneliness like any lark's nest. Even in the great days of the Revolution it had been quiet. It had had a lord whom it loved in the old castle on the hill at whose feet it nestled; it had never tried to harm him, and it had wept bitterly when he had fallen at Jemappes, and left no heir, and the château had crumbled into ivy-hung ruins. The thunder-heats of that dread time had scarcely scorched it. It had seen a few of its best youth march away to the chant of the Marseillaise to fight on the plains of Champagne; and it had been visited by some patriots in *bonnets rouges* and soldiers in blue uniforms, who had given it tricolored cockades and bade it wear

them in the holy name of the Republic one and indivisible. But it had not known what these meant, and its harvests had been reaped without the sound of a shot in its fields or any gleam of steel by its innocent hearths; so that the terrors and the tidings of those noble and ghastly years had left no impress on its generations.

Reine Allix, indeed, the oldest woman amongst them all, numbering more than ninety years, remembered when she was a child hearing her father and his neighbors talk in low, awe-stricken tones one bitter wintry night of how a king had been slain to save the people; and she remembered likewise — remembered it well, because it had been her betrothal-night and the sixteenth birthday of her life — how a horseman had flashed through the startled street like a comet, and had called aloud in a voice of fire, “Gloire! gloire! gloire! — Marengo! Marengo! Marengo!” and how the village had dimly understood that something marvellous for France had happened afar off, and how her brothers and her cousins and her betrothed, and she with them, had all gone up to the high slope over the river, and had piled up a great pyramid of pine wood and straw and dried mosses, and had set flame to it, till it had glowed in its scarlet triumph all through that wondrous night of the sultry summer of victory.

These and the like memories she would sometimes relate to the children at evening when they gathered round her begging for a story. Otherwise, no memories of the Revolution or the Empire disturbed the tranquillity of the Berceau; and even she, after she had told them, would add: “I am not sure now what Marengo

was. A battle, no doubt, but I am not sure where nor why. But we heard later that little Claudis, my aunt's youngest-born, a volunteer not nineteen, died at it. If we had known, we should not have gone up and lit the bonfire."

This woman, who had been born in that time of famine and flame, was the happiest creature in the whole hamlet of the Berceau. "I am old; yes, I am very old," she would say, looking up from her spinning-wheel in her house-door, and shading her eyes from the sun, — "very old, — ninety-two last summer. But when one has a roof over one's head, and a pot of soup always, and a grandson like mine, and when one has lived all one's life in the Berceau de Dieu, then it is well to be so old. Ah yes, my little ones, — yes, though you doubt it, you little birds that have just tried your wings, — it is well to be so old. One has time to think, and thank the good God, which one never seemed to have a minute to do in that work, work, work when one was young."

Reine Allix was a tall and strong woman, very withered, and very bent, and very brown, yet with sweet, dark, flashing eyes that had still light in them, and a face that was still noble, though nearly a century had bronzed it with its harvest suns and blown on it with its winter winds. She wore always the same garb of homely dark-blue serge, always the same tall white head-gear, always the same pure silver ear-rings that had been at once an heirloom and a nuptial gift. She was always shod in her wooden sabots, and she always walked abroad with a staff of ash. She had been born in the Berceau de Dieu; had lived there and wedded there;

had toiled there all her life, and never left it for a greater distance than a league or a longer time than a day. She loved it with an intense love: the world beyond it was nothing to her; she scarcely believed in it as existing. She could neither read nor write. She told the truth, reared her offspring in honesty, and praised God always, — had praised him when starving in a bitter winter after her husband's death, when there had been no field-work, and she had had five children to feed and clothe; and praised him now that her sons were all dead before her, and all she had living of her blood was her grandson Bernadou.

Her life had been a hard one. Her parents had been hideously poor. Her marriage had scarcely bettered her condition. She had labored in the fields always, hoeing and weeding and reaping and carrying wood and driving mules, and continually rising with the first streak of the daybreak. She had known fever and famine and all manner of earthly ills. But now in her old age she had peace. Two of her dead sons, who had sought their fortunes in the other hemisphere, had left her a little money, and she had a little cottage and a plot of ground, and a pig, and a small orchard. She was well-to-do, and could leave it all to Bernadou; and for ten years she had been happy, perfectly happy, in the coolness and the sweetness and the old familiar ways and habits of the Berceau.

Bernadou was very good to her. The lad, as she called him, was five-and-twenty years old, tall and straight and elcan-limbed, with the blue eyes of the North, and a gentle, frank face. He worked early and

late in the plot of ground that gave him his livelihood. He lived with his grandmother, and tended her with a gracious courtesy and veneration that never altered. He was not very wise; he also could neither read nor write; he believed in his priest and his homestead, and loved the ground that he had trodden ever since his first steps from the cradle had been guided by Reine Allix. He had never been drawn for the conscription, because he was the only support of a woman of ninety; he likewise had never been half a dozen kilomètres from his birthplace. When he was bidden to vote, and he asked what his vote of assent would pledge him to, they told him, "It will bind you to honor your grandmother so long as she shall live, and to get up with the lark, and to go to mass every Sunday, and to be a loyal son to your country. Nothing more." And thereat he had smiled and straightened his stalwart frame, and gone right willingly to the voting-urn.

He was very stupid in these things; and Reine Allix, though clear-headed and shrewd, was hardly more learned in them than he.

"Look you," she had said to him oftentimes, "in my babyhood there was the old white flag upon the château. Well, they pulled that down and put up a red one. That toppled and fell, and there was one of three colors. Then somebody with a knot of white lilies in his hand came one day and set up the old white one afresh; and before the day was done that was down again and the tricolor again up where it is. Now, some I know fretted themselves greatly because of all these changes of the flags, but as for me, I could not see that any one of

them mattered: bread was just as dear and sleep was just as sweet whichever of the three was uppermost."

Bernadou, who had never known but the flag of three colors, believed her, as indeed he believed every word that those kindly and resolute old lips ever uttered to him.

He had never been in a city, and only once, on the day of his first communion, in the town four leagues away. He knew nothing more than this simple, cleanly, honest life that he led. With what men did outside his little world of meadow-land and woodland he had no care nor any concern. Once a man had come through the village of the Bereeau, a travelling hawker of cheap prints, — a man with a wild eye and a restless brain, — who told Bernadou that he was a down-trodden slave, a elod, a beast like a mule, who fetched and carried that the rich might fatten, — a dolt, an idiot, who cared nothing for the rights of man and the wrongs of the poor. Bernadou had listened with a perplexed face: then with a smile, that had cleared it like sunlight, he had answered in his country dialect, "I do not know of what you speak. Rights? Wrongs? I cannot tell. But I have never owed a sou; I have never told a lie; I am strong enough to hold my own with any man that flouts me; and I am content where I am. That is enough for me."

The pedler had called him a poor-spirited beast of burden, but had said so out of reach of his arm, and by night had slunk away from the Bereeau de Dieu, and had been no more seen there to vex the quiet contentment of its peaceful and peace-loving ways.

At night, indeed, sometimes, the little wine-shop of the village would be frequented by some half-dozen of the peasant proprietors of the place, who talked Communism after their manner, not a very clear one, in excited tones and with the feverish glances of conspirators. But it meant little, and came to less. The weather and the price of wheat were dearer matters to them; and in the end they usually drank their red wine in amity, and went up the village street arm in arm, singing patriotic songs until their angry wives flung open their lattices and thrust their white head-gear out into the moonlight, and called to them shrewishly to get to bed and not make fools of themselves in that fashion; which usually silenced and sobered them all instantly; so that the revolutions of the *Berceau de Dieu*, if not quenched in a wine-pot, were always smothered in a nightcap, and never by any chance disturbed its repose.

But of these noisy patriots, Bernadou was never one. He had the instinctive conservatism of the French peasant, which is in such direct and tough antagonism with the feverish Socialism of the French artisan. His love was for the soil, — a love deep-rooted as the oaks that grew in it. Of Paris he had a dim, vague dread, as of a superb beast continually draining and devouring. Of all forms of government he was alike ignorant. So long as he tilled his little angle of land in peace, so long as the sun ripened his fruits and corn, so long as famine was away from his door and his neighbors dwelt in good-fellowship with him, so long he was happy, and cared not whether he was thus happy under a monarchy, an empire, or a republic. This wisdom, which the pedler called

apathy and cursed, the young man had imbibed from Nature and the teachings of Reine Allix. "Look at home and mind thy work," she had said always to him. "It is labor enough for a man to keep his own life clean and his own hands honest. Be not thou at any time as they are who are forever telling the good God how he might have made the world on a better plan, while the rats gnaw at their haystacks and the children cry over an empty platter."

And he had taken heed to her words; so that in all the countryside there was not any lad truer, gentler, braver, or more patient at labor than was Bernadou; and though some thought him mild even to foolishness, and meek even to stupidity, he was no fool; and he had a certain rough skill at music, and a rare gift at the culture of plants, and made his little home bright within in the winter-time with melody, and in the summer gay without as a king's parterre.

At any rate, Reine Allix and he had been happy together for a quarter of a century under the old gray thatch of the wayside cottage, where it stood at the foot of the village street, with its great syeamores spread above it. Nor were they less happy when in mid-April, in the six-and-twentieth year of his age, Bernadou had come in with a bunch of primroses in his hand, and had bent down to her and saluted her with a respectful tenderness, and said softly and a little shyly, "Gran'mère, would it suit you if I were ever — to marry?"

Reine Allix was silent a minute and more, cherishing the primroses and placing them in a little brown eupful of water. Then she looked at him steadily with her

clear, dark eyes: "Who is it, my child?" He was always a child to her, this last-born of the numerous brood that had once dwelt with her under the spreading branches of the syeamores, and had now all perished off the face of the earth, leaving himself and her alone.

Bernadou's eyes met hers frankly: "It is Margot Dal: does that please you, Gran'mère, or no?"

"It pleases me well," she said simply. But there was a little quiver about her firm-set mouth, and her aged head was bent over the primroses. She had foreseen it; she was glad of it; and yet for the instant it was a pang to her.

"I am very thankful," said Bernadou, with a flash of joy on his face. He was independent of his grandmother: he could make enough to marry upon by his daily toil, and he had a little store of gold and silver in his bank in the thatch, put by for a rainy day; but he would have no more thought of going against her will than he would have thought of lifting his hand against her. In the primitive homesteads of the Berceau de Dieu filial reverence was still accounted the first of virtues, yet the simplest and the most imperative.

"I will go see Margot this evening," said Reine Allix after a little pause. "She is a good girl and a brave, and of pure heart and fair name. You have chosen well, my grandson."

Bernadou stooped his tall, fair, curly head, and she laid her hands on him and blessed him.

That evening, as the sun set, Reine Allix kept her word, and went to the young maiden who had allured the eyes and heart of Bernadou. Margot was an orphan:

she had not a penny to her dower; she had been brought up on charity, and she dwelt now in the family of the largest land-owner of the place, a miller with a numerous offspring, and several head of cattle, and many stretches of pasture and of orchard. Margot worked for a hard master, living indeed as one of the family, but sharply driven all day long at all manner of housework and field-work. Reine Allix had kept her glance on her, through some instinctive sense of the way that Bernadou's thoughts were turning, and she had seen much to praise, nothing to chide, in the young girl's modest, industrious, cheerful, uncomplaining life. Margot was very pretty, too, with the brown oval face, and the great black, soft eyes, and the beautiful form of the Southern blood that had run in the veins of her father, who had been a sailor of Marseilles, whilst her mother had been a native of the Provençal country. Altogether, Reine Allix knew that her beloved one could not have done better or more wisely, if choose at all he must. Some people, indeed, she said to herself as she climbed the street whose sharp-set flints had been trodden by her wooden shoes for ninety years, — "Some people would mourn and weep because there is no store of linen, no piece of silver plate, no little round sum in money with the poor child. But what does it matter? We have enough for three. It is wicked indeed for parents to live so that they leave their daughter portionless, but it is no fault of the child's. Let them say what they like, it is a reason the more that she should want a roof over her head and a husband to care for her good."

So she climbed the steep way and the slanting road

round the hill, and went in by the door of the mill-house, and found Margot busy in washing some spring lettuces and other green things in a bowl of bright water. Reine Allix, in the fashion of her country and her breeding, was about to confer with the master and mistress ere saying a word to the girl, but there was that in Margot's facè and in her timid greeting that lured speech out of her. She looked long and keenly into the child's down-cast countenance, then touched her with a tender smile: "Petite Margot, the birds told me a little secret to-day. Canst guess what it is? Say?"

Margot colored and then grew pale. True, Bernadou had never really spoken to her, but still, when one is seventeen, and has danced a few times with the same person, and has plucked the leaves of a daisy away to learn one's fortune, spoken words are not very much wanted.

At sight of her the eyes of the old woman moistened and grew dimmer than age had made them: she smiled still, but the smile had the sweetness of a blessing in it, and no longer the kindly banter of humor. "You love him, my little one?" she said in a soft, hushed voice.

"Ah, madame —!" Margot could not say more. She covered her face with her hands, and turned to the wall, and wept with a passion of joy.

Down in the Berceau there were gossips who would have said, with wise shakes of their heads, "Tut, tut! how easy it is to make believe in a little love when one is a serving-maid, and has not a sou, nor a roof, nor a friend in the world, and a comely youth well-to-do is willing to marry us!"

But Reine Allix knew better. She had not lived ninety years in the world not to be able to discern between true feeling and counterfeit. She was touched, and drew the trembling frame of Margot into her arms, and kissed her twice on the closed, blue-veined lids of her black eyes. "Make him happy, only make him happy," she murmured; "for I am very old, Margot, and he is alone, all alone."

And the child crept to her, sobbing for very rapture that she, friendless, homeless, and penniless, should be thus elected for so fair a fate, and whispered through her tears, "I will."

Reine Allix spoke in all form to the miller and his wife, and with as much earnestness in her demand as though she had been seeking the hand of rich Yacobé, the tavern-keeper's only daughter. The people assented: they had no pretext to oppose, and Reine Allix wrapped her cloak about her and descended the hill and the street just as the twilight closed in and the little lights began to glimmer through the lattices and the shutters and the green mantle of the boughs, whilst the red fires of the smithy forge glowed brightly in the gloom, and a white horse waited to be shod, a boy in a blue blouse seated on its back and switching away with a branch of budding hazel the first gray gnats of the early year.

"It is well done, it is well done," she said to herself, looking at the low rosy clouds and the pale gold of the waning sky. "A year or two, and I shall be in my grave. I shall leave him easier if I know he has some creature to care for him, and I shall be quiet in my coffin, knowing that his children's children will live on and

on and on in the Bereean, and sometimes perhaps think a little of me when the nights are long and they sit round the fire."

She went in out of the dewy air, into the little low, square room of her cottage, and went up to Bernadon and laid her hands on his shoulders.

"Be it well with thee, my grandson, and with thy sons' sons after thee," she said solemnly. "Margot will be thy wife. May thy days and hers be long in thy birthplace!"

A month later they were married. It was then May. The green nest of the Berceau seemed to overflow with the singing of birds and the blossoming of flowers. The cornlands promised a rare harvest, and the apple orchards were weighed down with their red and white blossoms. The little brown streams in the woods brimmed over in the grass, and the air was full of a sweet mellow sunlight, a cool, fragrant breeze, a continual music of humming bees and soaring larks and mule-bells ringing on the roads, and childish laughter echoing from the fields.

In this glad springtime Bernadou and Margot were wedded, going with their friends one sunny morning up the winding hill-path to the little gray chapel whose walls were hidden in ivy, and whose sorrowful Christ looked down through the open porch across the blue and hazy width of the river. Georges the baker, whose fiddle made merry melody at all the village dances, played before them tunefully; little children, with their hands full of wood-flowers, ran before them; his old blind poodle smelt its way faithfully by their footsteps;

their priest led the way upward with the cross held erect against the light ; Reine Allix walked beside them, nearly as firmly as she had trodden the same road seventy years before in her own bridal hour : in the hollow below lay the Bereau de Dieu, with its red gables and its thatched roofs hidden beneath leaves, and its peaceful pastures smiling under the serene blue skies of France.

They were happy, — ah, Heaven, so happy ! — and all their little world rejoiced with them.

They came home, and their neighbors entered with them, and ate and drank, and gave them good wishes and gay songs ; and the old priest blessed them with a father's tenderness upon their threshold ; and the fiddle of Georges sent gladdest dance-music flying through the open casements, across the road, up the hill, far away to the clouds and the river.

At night, when the guests had departed and all was quite still within and without, Reine Allix sat alone at her window in the roof, thinking of their future and of her past, and watching the stars come out, one by another, above the woods. From her lattice in the eaves she saw straight up the village street ; saw the dwellings of her lifelong neighbors, the slopes of the rich fields, the gleam of the broad gray water, the whiteness of the crucifix against the darkened skies. She saw it all, — all so familiar, with that intimate association only possible to the peasant who has dwelt on one spot from birth to age. In that faint light, in those deep shadows, she could trace all the scene as though the brightness of the noon shone on it : it was all, in

its homeliness and simplicity, intensely dear to her. In the playtime of her childhood, in the courtship of her youth, in the joys and woes of her wifehood and widowhood, the bitter pains and sweet ecstasies of her maternity, the hunger and privation of struggling, desolate years, the contentment and serenity of old age, — in all these her eyes had rested only on this small, quaint, leafy street, with its dwellings close and low, like beehives in a garden, and its pasture-lands and cornlands, wood-girt and water-fed, stretching as far as the sight could reach. Every inch of its soil, every turn of its paths, was hallowed to her with innumerable memories : all her beloved dead were garnered there where the white Christ watched them : when her time should come, she thought, she would rest with them nothing loath. As she looked, the tears of thanksgiving rolled down her withered cheeks, and she bent her feeble limbs and knelt down in the moonlight, praising God that he had given her to live and die in this cherished home, and beseeching him for her children that they likewise might dwell in honesty, and with length of days abide beneath that roof.

“God is good,” she murmured, as she stretched herself to sleep beneath the eaves, — “God is good. Maybe, when he takes me to himself, if I be worthy, he will tell his holy saints to give me a little corner in his kingdom, that he shall fashion for me in the likeness of the Berceau.” For it seemed to her that, than the Berceau, heaven itself could hold no sweeter or fairer nook of Paradise.

The year rolled on, and the cottage under the syc-

mores was but the happier for its new inmate. Bernadou was serious of temper, though so gentle, and the arch, gay humor of his young wife was like perpetual sunlight in the house. Margot, too, was so docile, so eager, so bright, and so imbued with devotional reverence for her husband and his home, that Reine Allix day by day blessed the fate that had brought to her this fatherless and penniless child. Bernadou himself spoke little: words were not in his way, but his blue, frank eyes shone with an unclouded radiance that never changed, and his voice, when he did speak, had a mellow softness in it that made his slightest speech to the two women with him tender as a caress.

"Thou art a happy woman, my sister," said the priest, who was wellnigh as old as herself.

Reine Allix bowed her head and made the sign of the cross: "I am, praise be to God!"

And being happy, she went to the hovel of poor Madelon Dreux, the cobbler's widow, and nursed her and her children through a malignant fever, sitting early and late, and leaving her own peaceful hearth for the desolate hut with the delirious ravings and heart-rending moans of the fever-stricken. "How ought one to dare to be happy if one is not of use?" she would say to those who sought to dissuade her from running such peril.

Madelon Dreux and her family recovered, owing to her their lives, and she was happier than before, thinking of them when she sat on the settle before the wood-fire roasting chestnuts and spinning flax on the wheel, and ever and again watching the flame reflected on the

fair head of Bernadou or in the dark, smiling eyes of Margot.

Another spring passed and another year went by, and the little home under the sycamores was still no less honest in its labors or bright in its rest. It was one amongst a million of such homes in France, where a sunny temper made mirth with a meal of herbs, and filial love touched to poetry the prose of daily household tasks.

A child was born to Margot in the springtime with the violets and daisies, and Reine Allix was proud of the fourth generation, and as she caressed the boy's healthy, fair limbs, thought that God was indeed good to her, and that her race would live long in the place of her birth. The child resembled Bernadou, and had his clear, candid eyes. It soon learned to know the voice of "Gran'mère," and would turn from its young mother's bosom to stretch its arms to Reine Allix. It grew fair and strong, and all the ensuing winter passed its hours curled like a dormouse or playing like a puppy at her feet in the chimney-corner. Another spring and summer came, and the boy was more than a year old, with curls of gold, and cheeks like apples, and a mouth that always smiled. He could talk a little, and tumbled like a young rabbit amongst the flowering grasses. Reine Allix watched him, and her eyes filled. "God is too good," she thought. She feared that she should scarce be so willing to go to her last sleep under the trees on the hillside as she had used to be. She could not help a desire to see this child, this second Bernadou, grow up to youth and manhood; and of this she knew it was wild to dream.

It was ripe midsummer. The fields were all russet and amber with an abundance of corn. The little gardens had seldom yielded so rich a produce. The cattle and the flocks were in excellent health. There had never been a season of greater promise and prosperity for the little traffic that the village and its farms drove in sending milk and sheep and vegetable wealth to that great city which was to it as a dim, wonderful, mystic name without meaning.

One evening in this gracious and golden time the people sat out as usual when the day was done, talking from door to door, the old women knitting or spinning, the younger ones mending their husbands' or brothers' blouses or the little blue shirts of their infants, the children playing with the dogs on the sward that edged the stones of the street, and above all the great calm heavens and the glow of the sun that had set.

Reine Allix, like the others, sat before the door, for once doing nothing, but with folded hands and bended head dreamily taking pleasure in the coolness that had come with evening, and the smell of the limes that were in blossom, and the blithe chatter of Margot with the neighbors. Bernadou was close beside them, watering and weeding those flowers that were at once his pride and his recreation, making the face of his dwelling bright and the air around it full of fragrance.

The little street was quiet in the evening light, only the laughter of the children and the gay gossip of their mothers breaking the pleasant stillness; it had been thus at evening with the Bereau centuries before their time, — they thought that it would thus likewise be when cen-

turies should have seen the youngest-born there in his grave.

Suddenly came along the road between the trees an old man and a mule : it was Mathurin the miller, who had been that day to a little town four leagues off, which was the trade-mart and the corn-exchange of the district. He paused before the cottage of Reine Allix ; he was dusty, travel-stained, and sad. Margot ceased laughing among her flowers as she saw her old master. None of them knew why, yet the sight of him made the air seem cold and the night seem near.

“There is terrible news,” he said, drawing a sheet of printed words from his coat-pocket, — “terrible news ! We are to go to war.”

“War !” The whole village clustered round him. They had heard of war, far-off wars in Africa and Mexico, and some of their sons had been taken off like young wheat mown before its time ; but it still remained to them a thing remote, impersonal, inconceivable, with which they had nothing to do, nor ever would have anything.

“Read !” said the old man, stretching out his sheet. The only one there who could do so, Picot the tailor, took it and spelled the news out to their wondering ears. It was the declaration of France against Prussia.

There arose a great wail from the mothers whose sons were conscripts. The rest asked in trembling, “Will it touch us ?”

“Us !” echoed Picot the tailor, in contempt. “How should it touch us ? Our braves will be in Berlin with another fortnight. The paper says so.”

The people were silent: they were not sure what he meant by Berlin, and they were afraid to ask.

"My boy! my boy!" wailed one woman, smiting her breast. Her son was in the army.

"Marengo!" murmured Reine Allix, thinking of that far-off time in her dim youth when the horseman had flown through the dusky street and the bonfire had blazed on the highest hill above the river.

"Bread will be dear," muttered Mathurin the miller, going onward with his foot-weary mule. Bernadou stood silent, with his roses dry and thirsty round him.

"Why art thou sad?" whispered Margot with wistful eyes. "Thou art exempt from war-service, my love?"

Bernadou shook his head. "The poor will suffer somehow," was all he answered.

Yet to him, as to all in the Berceau, the news was not very terrible, because it was so vague and distant, — an evil so far off and shapeless.

Monsieur Picot the tailor, who alone could read, ran from house to house, from group to group, breathless, gay, and triumphant, telling them all that in two weeks more their brethren would sup in the king's palace at Berlin; and the people believed and laughed and chattered, and, standing outside their doors in the cool nights, thought that some good had come to them and theirs.

Only Reine Allix looked up to the hill above the river and murmured, "When we lit the bonfire there, Claudis lay dead"; and Bernadou, standing musing amongst his roses, said with a smile that was very grave, "Margot,

see here! When Pieot shouted, 'À Berlin!' he trod on my Gloire de Dijon rose and killed it."

The sultry heats and cloudless nights of the wondrous and awful summer of the year eighteen hundred and seventy passed by, and to the Bereeau de Dieu it was a summer of fair promise and noble harvest, and never had the land brought forth in richer profusion for man and beast. Some of the youngest and ablest-bodied laborers were indeed drawn away to join those swift trains that hurried thousands and tens of thousands to the frontier by the Rhine. But most of the male population were married, and were the fathers of young children, and the village was only moved to a thrill of love and of honest pride to think how its young Louis and Jean and André and Valentin were gone full of high hope and high spirit, to come back, maybe, — who could say not? — with epaulets and ribbons of honor. Why they were gone they knew not very clearly, but their superiors affirmed that they were gone to make greater the greatness of France; and the folk of the Bereeau believed it, having in a corner of their quiet hearts a certain vague, dormant, yet deep-rooted love, on which was written the name of their country.

News came slowly and seldom to the Bereeau. Unless some one of the men rode his mule to the little town, which was but very rarely, or unless some pedler came through the village with a news-sheet or so in his pack or rumors and tidings on his lips, nothing that was done beyond its fields and woods came to it. And the truth of what it heard it had no means of measuring or sifting. It believed what it was told, without question-

ing; and as it reaped the harvests in the rich hot sun of August, its peasants labored cheerily in the simple and firm belief that mighty things were being done for them and theirs in the far eastern provinces by their great army, and that Louis and Jean and André and Valentin and the rest — though indeed no tidings had been heard of them — were safe and well and glorious somewhere, away where the sun rose, in the sacked palaces of the German king. Reine Allix alone of them was serious and sorrowful, — she whose memories stretched back over the wide space of near a century.

“Why art thou anxious, Gran’mère?” they said to her. “There is no cause. Our army is victorious everywhere; and they say our lads will send us all the Prussians’ corn and cattle, so that the very beggars will have their stomachs full.”

But Reine Allix shook her head, sitting knitting in the sun: “My children, I remember the days of my youth. Our army was victorious then; at least they said so. Well, all I know is that little Claudis and the boys with him never came back; and as for bread, you could not get it for love or money, and the people lay dead of famine out on the public roads.”

“But that is so long ago, Gran’mère!” they urged.

Reine Allix nodded. “Yes. It is long ago, my dears. But I do not think that things change very much.”

They were silent out of respect for her, but amongst themselves they said, “She is very old. Nothing is as it was in her time.”

One evening, when the sun was setting red over the reapen fields, two riders on trembling and sinking horses

went through the village using whip and spur, and scarcely drew rein as they shouted to the cottagers to know whether they had seen go by a man running for his life. The people replied that they had seen nothing of the kind, and the horsemen pressed on, jamming their spurs into their poor beasts' steaming flanks. "If you see him, catch and hang him," they shouted as they scoured away; "he is a Prussian spy!"

"A Prussian!" the villagers echoed with a stupid stare, — "a Prussian in France!"

One of the riders looked over his shoulders for a moment: "You fools! do you not know? We are beaten, — beaten everywhere, — and the Prussian pigs march on Paris."

The spy was not seen in the Berceau, but the news brought by his pursuers scared sleep from the eyes of every grown man that night in the little village. "It is the accursed Empire!" screamed the patriots of the wine-shop. But the rest of the people were too terrified and down-stricken to take heed of empires or patriots; they only thought of Louis and Jean and André and Valentin; and they collected round Reine Allix, who said to them, "My children, for love of money all our fairest fruits and flowers — yea, even to the best blossoms of our maidenhood — were sent to be bought and sold in Paris. We sinned therein, and this is the will of God."

This was all for a time that they heard. It was a place lowly and obscure enough to be left in peace. The law pounced down on it once or twice and carried off a few more of its men for army-service, and arms

were sent to it from its neighboring town, and an old soldier of the First Empire tried to instruct its remaining sons in their use. But he had no apt pupil except Bernadou, who soon learned to handle a musket with skill and with precision, and who carried his straight form gallantly and well, though his words were seldom heard and his eyes were always sad.

"You will not be called till the last, Bernadou," said the old soldier: "you are married, and maintain your grand-dame and wife and child. But a strong, muscular, well-built youth like you should not wait to be called, — you should volunteer to serve France."

"I will serve France when my time comes," said Bernadou, simply, in answer. But he would not leave his fields barren, and his orchard uncared for, and his wife to sicken and starve, and his grandmother to perish alone in her ninety-third year. They jeered and flouted and upbraided him, those patriots who screamed against the fallen Empire in the wine-shop, but he looked them straight in the eyes, and held his peace, and did his daily work.

"If he be called, he will not be found wanting," said Reine Allix, who knew him better than did even the young wife whom he loved.

Bernadou clung to his home with a dogged devotion. He would not go from it to fight unless compelled, but for it he would have fought like a lion. His love for his country was only an indefinite, shadowy existence that was not clear to him; he could not save a land that he had never seen, a capital that was only to him as an empty name; nor could he comprehend the danger that

his nation ran, nor could he desire to go forth and spend his life-blood in defence of things unknown to him. He was only a peasant, and he could not read nor greatly understand. But affection for his birthplace was a passion with him, — mute indeed, but deep-seated as an oak. For his birthplace he would have struggled as a man can only struggle when supreme love as well as duty nerves his arm. Neither he nor Reine Allix could see that a man's duty might lie from home, but in that home both were alike ready to dare anything and to suffer everything. It was a narrow form of patriotism, yet it had nobleness, endurance, and patience in it; in song it has been oftentimes deified as heroism, but in modern warfare it is punished as the blackest crime.

So Bernadou tarried in his cottage till he should be called, keeping watch by night over the safety of his village, and by day doing all he could to aid the deserted wives and mothers of the place by the tilling of their ground for them and the tending of such poor cattle as were left in their desolate fields. He and Margot and Reine Allix, between them, fed many mouths that would otherwise have been closed in death by famine, and denied themselves all except the barest and most meagre subsistence, that they might give away the little they possessed.

And all this while the war went on, but seemed far from them, so seldom did any tidings of it pierce the seclusion in which they dwelt. By and by, as the autumn went on, they learned a little more. Fugitives coming to the smithy for a horse's shoe; women fleeing to their old village homes from their base, gay life in

the city; mandates from the government of defence sent to every hamlet in the country; stray news-sheets brought in by carriers or hawkers and hucksters, — all these by degrees told them of the peril of their country, — vaguely, indeed, and seldom truthfully, but so that by mutilated rumors they came at last to know the awful facts of the fate of Sedan, the fall of the Empire, the siege of Paris. It did not alter their daily lives: it was still too far off and too impalpable. But a foreboding, a dread, an unspeakable woe settled down on them. Already their lands and cattle had been harassed to yield provision for the army and large towns; already their best horses had been taken for the siege-trains and the forage-wagons; already their ploughshares were perforce idle, and their children cried because of the scarcity of nourishment; already the iron of war had entered into their souls.

The little street at evening was mournful and very silent: the few who talked spoke in whispers, lest a spy should hear them, and the young ones had no strength to play: they wanted food.

“It is as it was in my youth,” said Reine Allix, eating her piece of black bread and putting aside the better food prepared for her, that she might save it, unseen, for “the child.”

It was horrible to her and to all of them to live in that continual terror of an unknown foe, — that perpetual expectation of some ghastly, shapeless misery. They were quiet, — so quiet! — but by all they heard they knew that any night, as they went to their beds, the thunder of cannon might awaken them; any morning,

as they looked on their beloved fields, they knew that ere sunset the flames of war might have devoured them. They knew so little too: all they were told was so indefinite and garbled that sometimes they thought the whole was some horrid dream, — thought so, at least, until they looked at their empty stables, their untilled land, their children who cried from hunger, their mothers who wept for the conscripts.

But as yet it was not so very much worse than it had been in times of bad harvest and of dire distress; and the storm which raged over the land had as yet spared this little green nest amongst the woods on the Seine.

November came. "It is a cold night, Bernadou: put on more wood," said Reine Allix. Fuel at the least was plentiful in that district, and Bernadou obeyed.

He sat at the table, working at a new churn for his wife: he had some skill at turnery and at invention in such matters. The child slept soundly in its cradle by the hearth, smiling while it dreamed. Margot spun at her wheel. Reine Allix sat by the fire, seldom lifting her head from her long knitting-needles, except to cast a look on her grandson or at the sleeping child. The little wooden shutter of the house was closed. Some winter roses bloomed in a pot beneath the little crucifix. Bernadou's flute lay on a shelf: he had not had heart enough to play it since the news of the war had come.

Suddenly a great sobbing cry rose without, — the cry of many voices, all raised in woe together. Bernadou rose, took his musket in his hand, undid his door and looked out. All the people were turned out into the street, and the women, loudly lamenting, beat their

breasts and strained their children to their bosoms. There was a sullen red light in the sky to the eastward, and on the wind a low, hollow roar stole to them.

"What is it?" he asked.

"The Prussians are on us!" answered twenty voices in one accord. "That red glare is the town burning."

Then they were all still, — a stillness that was more horrible than their lamentations.

Reine Allix came and stood by her grandson. "If we must die, let us die *here*," she said, in a voice that was low and soft and grave.

He took her hand and kissed it. She was content with his answer.

Margot stole forth too, and crouched behind them, holding her child to her breast. "What can they do to us?" she asked, trembling, with the rich colors of her face blanched white.

Bernadon smiled on her: "I do not know, my dear. I think even they can hardly bring death upon women and children."

"They can, and they will," said a voice from the crowd.

None answered. The street was very quiet in the darkness. Far away in the east the red glare glowed. On the wind was still that faint, distant, ravening roar, like the roar of famished wolves: it was the roar of fire and of war.

In the silence Reine Allix spoke: "God is good. Shall we not trust in him?"

With one great choking sob the people answered: their hearts were breaking. All night long they watched

in the street, — they who had done no more to bring this curse upon them than the flower-roots that slept beneath the snow. They dared not go to their beds: they knew not when the enemy might be upon them. They dared not flee: even in their own woods the foe might lurk for them. One man indeed did ery aloud, “Shall we stay here in our houses to be smoked out like bees from their hives? Let us fly!”

But the calm, firm voice of Reine Allix rebuked him: “Let who will, run like a hare from the hounds. For me and mine, we abide by our homestead.”

And they were ashamed to be outdone by a woman, and a woman ninety years old, and no man spoke any more of flight. All the night long they watched in the cold and the wind, the children shivering beneath their mothers’ skirts, the men sullenly watching the light of the flames in the dark, starless sky. All night long they were left alone, though far off they heard the dropping shots of scattered firing, and in the leafless woods around them the swift flight of woodland beasts startled from their sleep, and the hurrying feet of sheep terrified from their folds in the outlying fields.

The daybreak came, gray, cheerless, very cold. A dense fog, white and raw, hung over the river: in the east, where the sun, they knew, was rising, they could only see the livid light of the still towering flames and pillars of black smoke against the leaden clouds.

“We will let them come and go in peace if they will,” murmured old Mathurin. “What can we do? We have no arms, — no powder, hardly, — no soldiers, — no defence.”

Bernadou said nothing, but he straightened his tall limbs and in his grave blue eyes a light gleamed.

Reine Allix looked at him as she sat in the doorway of her house. "Thy hands are honest, thy heart pure, thy conscience clear. Be not afraid to die if need there be," she said to him.

He looked down and smiled on her. Margot elung to him in a passion of weeping. He clasped her close and kissed her softly, but the woman who read his heart was the woman who had held him at his birth.

By degrees the women erept timidly baek into their houses, hiding their eyes, so that they should not see that horrid light against the sky, whilst the starving children elung to their breasts or to their skirts, wailing aloud in terror. The few men there were left, for the most part of them very old or else mere striplings, gathered together in a hurried counail. Old Mathurin the miller and the patriots of the wine-shop were agreed that there could be no resistance, whatever might befall them, — that it would be best to hide such weapons as they had and any provisions that still remained to them, and yield up themselves and their homes with humble graee to the dire foe. "If we do otherwise," they said, "the soldiers will surely slay us, and what can a miserable little hamlet like this aehieve against eannon and steel and fire?"

Bernadou alone raised his voice in opposition. His eye kindled, his cheek flushed, his words for once sprang from his lips like fire. "What!" he said to them, "shall we yield up our homes and our wives and our infants without a single blow? Shall we be so vile as to truckle to the enemies of France, and show that we can fear

them? It were a shame, a foul shame; we were not worthy of the name of men. Let us prove to them that there are people in France who are not afraid to die. Let us hold our own so long as we can. Our muskets are good, our walls strong, our woods in this weather morasses that will suck in and swallow them if only we have tact to drive them there. Let us do what we can. The camp of the *francs-tireurs* is but three leagues from us. They will be certain to come to our aid. At any rate, let us die bravely. We can do little, — that may be. But if every man in France does that little that he can, that little will be great enough to drive the invaders off the soil."

Mathurin and the others screamed at him and hooted. "You are a fool!" they shouted. "You will be the undoing of us all. Do you not know that one shot fired, — nay, only one musket found, — and the enemy puts a torch to the whole place?"

"I know," said Bernadou, with a dark radiance in his azure eyes. "But then it is a choice between disgrace and the flames; let us only take heed to be clear of the first, — the last must rage as God wills."

But they screamed and mouthed and hissed at him: "O yes! fine talk, fine talk! See your own roof in flames if you will: you shall not ruin ours. Do what you will with your own neck. Keep it erect or hang by it, as you choose. But you have no right to give your neighbors over to death, whether they will or no."

He strove, he pleaded, he conjured, he struggled with them half the night, with the salt tears running down his cheeks, and all his gentle blood burning with righteous

wrath and loathing shame, stirred for the first time in all his life to a rude, simple, passionate eloquence. But they were not persuaded. Their few gold-pieces hidden in the rafters, their few feeble sheep starving in the folds, their own miserable lives, all hungry, woe-begone, and spent in daily terrors, — these were still dear to them, and they would not imperil them. They called him a madman; they denounced him as one who would be their murderer; they threw themselves on him and demanded his musket, to bury it with the rest under the altar in the old chapel on the hill.

Bernadou's eyes flashed fire; his breast heaved; his nerves quivered; he shook them off and strode a step forward. "As you live," he muttered, "I have a mind to fire on you, rather than let you live to shame yourselves and me!"

Reine Allix, who stood by him silent all the while, laid her hand on his shoulder. "My boy," she said in his ear, "you are right, and they wrong. Yet let not dissension between brethren open the door, for the enemy to enter thereby into your homes. Do what you will with your own life, Bernadou, — it is yours, — but leave them to do as they will with theirs. You cannot make sheep into lions, and let not the first blood shed here be a brother's."

Bernadou's head dropped on his breast. "Do as you will," he muttered to his neighbors. They took his musket from him, and in the darkness of the night stole silently up the wooded chapel-hill and buried it, with all their other arms, under the altar where the white Christ hung. "We are safe now," said Mathurin the miller to

the patriots of the tavern. "Had that madman had his way, he had destroyed us all."

Reine Allix softly led her grandson across his own threshold, and drew his head down to hers and kissed him between the eyes. "You did what you could, Bernadou," she said to him, "let the rest come as it will."

Then she turned from him, and flung her cloak over her head and sank down, weeping bitterly, for she had lived through ninety-three years only to see this agony at the last.

Bernadou, now that all means of defence was gone from him, and the only thing left to him to deal with was his own life, had become quiet and silent and passionless, as was his habit. He would have fought like a mastiff for his home, but this they had forbidden him to do, and he was passive and without hope. He shut to his door, and sat down with his hand in that of Reine Allix and his arm around his wife. "There is nothing to do but to wait," he said sadly. The day seemed very long in coming.

The firing ceased for a while; then its roll commenced afresh, and grew nearer to the village. Then again all was still.

At noon a shepherd staggered into the place, pale, bleeding, bruised, covered with mire. The Prussians, he told them, had forced him to be their guide, had knotted him tight to a trooper's saddle, and had dragged him with them until he was half dead with fatigue and pain. At night he had broken from them and had fled: they were close at hand, he said, and had burned the town from end to end because a man had fired at them

from a house-top. That was all he knew. Bernadou, who had gone out to hear his news, returned into the house and sat down and hid his face within his hands. "If I resist you are all lost," he muttered. "And yet to yield like a cur!" It was a piteous question, whether to follow the instinct in him and see his birthplace in flames and his family slaughtered for his act, or to crush out the manhood in him and live, loathing himself as a coward forevermore.

Reine Allix looked at him, and laid her hand on his bowed head, and her voice was strong and tender as music: "Fret not thyself, my beloved. When the moment comes, then do as thine own heart and the whisper of God in it bid thee."

A great sob answered her; it was the first since his earliest infancy that she had ever heard from Bernadou.

It grew dark. The autumn day died. The sullen clouds dropped scattered rain. The red leaves were blown in millions by the wind. The little houses on either side the road were dark, for the dwellers in them dared not show any light that might be a star to allure to them the footsteps of their foes. Bernadou sat with his arms on the table, and his head resting on them. Margot nursed her son: Reine Allix prayed.

Suddenly in the street without there was the sound of many feet of horses and of men, the shouting of angry voices, the splashing of quick steps in the watery ways, the screams of women, the flash of steel through the gloom. Bernadou sprang to his feet, his face pale, his blue eyes dark as night. "They are come!" he said under his breath. It was not fear that he felt, nor hor-

ror: it was rather a passion of love for his birthplace and his nation, — a passion of longing to struggle and to die for both. And he had no weapon!

He drew his house-door open with a steady hand, and stood on his own threshold and faced these, his enemies. The street was full of them, — some mounted, some on foot: crowds of them swarmed in the woods and on the roads. They had settled on the village as vultures on a dead lamb's body. It was a little, lowly place: it might well have been left in peace. It had had no more share in the war than a child still unborn, but it came in the victors' way, and their mailed heel crushed it as they passed. They had heard that arms were hidden and *francs-tireurs* sheltered there, and they had swooped down on it and held it hard and fast. Some were told off to search the chapel; some to ransack the dwellings; some to seize such food and bring such cattle as there might be left; some to seek out the devious paths that crossed and recrossed the fields; and yet there still remained in the little street hundreds of armed men, force enough to awe a citadel or storm a breach.

The people did not attempt to resist. They stood passive, dry-eyed in misery, looking on whilst the little treasures of their household lives were swept away forever, and ignorant what fate by fire or iron might be their portion ere the night was done. They saw the corn that was their winter store to save their offspring from famine poured out like ditch-water. They saw oats and wheat flung down to be trodden into a slough of mud and filth. They saw the walnut presses in their kitchens broken open, and their old heirlooms of silver,

centuries old, borne away as booty. They saw the oak cupboards in their wives' bedchambers ransacked, and the homespun linen and the quaint bits of plate that had formed their nuptial dowers cast aside in derision or trampled into a battered heap. They saw the pet lamb of their infants, the silver ear-rings of their brides, the brave tankards they had drunk their marriage wine in, the tame bird that flew to their whistle, all seized for food or seized for spoil. They saw all this, and had to stand by with mute tongues and passive hands, lest any glance of wrath or gesture of revenge should bring the leaden bullet in their children's throats or the yellow flame amidst their homesteads. Greater agony the world cannot hold.

Under the porch of the cottage, by the sycamores, one group stood and looked, silent and very still, — Bernadou, erect, pale, calm, with a fierce scorn burning in his eyes; Margot, quiet, because he wished her so, holding to her the rosy and golden beauty of her son; Reine Allix, with a patient horror on her face, her figure drawn to its full height, and her hands holding to her breast the crucifix. They stood thus, waiting they knew not what, only resolute to show no cowardice and meet no shame.

Behind them was the dull, waning glow of the wood-fire on the hearth which had been the centre of all their hopes and joys; before them the dim, dark country, and the woe-stricken faces of their neighbors, and the moving soldiery with their torches, and the quivering forms of the half-dying horses.

Suddenly a voice arose from the armed mass: "Bring me the peasant hither."

Bernadou was seized by several hands and forced and

dragged from his door out to the place where the leader of the Uhlans sat on a white charger that shook and snorted blood in its exhaustion. Bernadou cast off the alien grasp that held him, and stood erect before his foes. He was no longer pale, and his eyes were clear and steadfast.

“ You look less a fool than the rest,” said the Prussian commander. “ You know this country well ? ”

“ Well ! ” The country in whose fields and woodlands he had wandered from his infancy, and whose every meadow-path and wayside tree and flower-sown brook he knew by heart as a lover knows the lines of his mistress’s face !

“ You have arms here ? ” pursued the German.

“ We had.”

“ What have you done with them ? ”

“ If I had had my way, you would not need ask. You would have felt them.”

The Prussian looked at him keenly, doing homage to the boldness of the answer. “ Will you confess where they are ? ”

“ No.”

“ You know the penalty for concealment of arms is death ? ”

“ You have made it so.”

“ We have, and Prussian will is French law. You are a bold man : you merit death. But still, you know the country well ? ”

Bernadou smiled, as a mother might smile were any foolish enough to ask her if she remembered the look her dead child’s face had worn.

"If you know it well," pursued the Prussian, "I will give you a chance. Lay hold of my stirrup-leather and be lashed to it, and show me straight as the arrow flies to where the weapons are hidden. If you do, I will leave you your life. If you do not —"

"If I do not?"

"You will be shot."

Bernadou was silent: his eyes glanced through the mass of soldiers to the little cottage under the trees opposite: the two there were straining to behold him, but the soldiers pushed them back, so that in the flare of the torches they could not see, nor in the tumult hear. He thanked God for it.

"Your choice?" asked the Uhlan impatiently, after a moment's pause.

Bernadou's lips were white, but they did not tremble as he answered, "I am no traitor." And his eyes as he spoke went softly to the little porch where the light glowed from that hearth beside which he would never again sit with the creatures he loved around him.

The German looked at him: "Is that a boast, or a fact?"

"I am no traitor," Bernadou answered simply once more.

The Prussian gave a sign to his troopers. There was the sharp report of a double shot, and Bernadou fell dead. One bullet had pierced his brain, the other was bedded in his lungs. The soldiers kicked aside the warm and quivering body. It was only a peasant killed!

With a shriek that rose above the roar of the wind,

and cut like steel to every human heart that beat there, Reine Allix forced her way through the throng, and fell on her knees beside him, and caught him in her arms, and laid his head upon her breast, where he had used to sleep his softest sleep in infancy and childhood. "It is God's will, it is God's will!" she muttered; and then she laughed; a laugh so terrible that the blood of the boldest there ran cold.

Margot followed her and looked, and stood dry-eyed and silent; then flung herself and the child she carried in her arms beneath the hoof of the white charger. "End your work!" she shrieked to them. "You have killed him, — kill us. Have you not merey enough for that?"

The horse, terrified and snorting blood, plunged and trampled the ground: his forefoot struck the child's golden head and stamped its face out of all human likeness. Some peasants pulled Margot from the lashing hoofs: she was quite dead, though neither wound nor bruise was on her.

Reine Allix neither looked nor paused. With all her strength she had begun to drag the body of Bernadou across the threshold of his house. "He shall lie at home, he shall lie at home," she muttered. She would not believe that already he was dead. With all the force of her earliest womanhood she lifted him, and half drew, half bore him into the home that he had loved, and laid him down upon the hearth, and knelt by him, caressing him as though he were once more a child, and saying softly, "Hush!" for her mind was gone, and she fancied that he only slept.

Without, the tumult of the soldiery increased: they

found the arms hidden under the altar on the hill; they seized five peasants to slay them for the dire offence. The men struggled, and would not go as the sheep to the shambles. They were shot down in the street, before the eyes of their children. Then the order was given to fire the place in punishment, and leave it to its fate. The torches were flung with a laugh on the dry thatched roofs, — brands snatched from the house-fires on the hearths were tossed amongst the dwelling-houses and the barns. The straw and timber flared alight like tow.

An old man, her nearest neighbor, rushed to the cottage of Reine Allix and seized her by the arm. "They fire the Bereau," he screamed. "Quick! quick! or you will be burned alive!"

Reine Allix looked up with a smile: "Be quiet! Do you not see? He sleeps."

The old man shook her, implored her, strove to drag her away, — in desperation pointed to the roof above, which was already in flames.

Reine Allix looked: at that sight her mind cleared, and regained consciousness: she remembered all, she understood all: she knew that he was dead. "Go in peace and save yourself," she said in the old, sweet, strong tone of an earlier day. "As for me, I am very old. I and my dead will stay together at home."

The man fled, and left her to her choice.

The great curled flames and the livid vapors closed around her: she never moved. The death was fierce but swift, and even in death she and the one whom she had loved and reared were not divided. The end soon came. From hill to hill the Bereau de Dieu broke into

flames. The village was a lake of fire, into which the statue of the Christ, burning and reeling, fell. Some few peasants, with their wives and children, fled to the woods, and there escaped one torture to perish more slowly of cold and famine. All other things perished. The rapid stream of the flame licked up all there was in its path. The bare trees raised their leafless branches on fire at a thousand points. The stores of corn and fruit were lapped by millions of crimson tongues. The pigeons flew screaming from their roosts, and sank into the smoke. The dogs were suffocated on the thresholds they had guarded all their lives. The calf was stifled in the byre. The sheep ran bleating with the wool burning on their living bodies. The little eaged birds fluttered helpless, and then dropped, seorehed to einders. The aged and the siek were stifled in their beds. All things perished.

The Bereeau de Dieu was as one vast furnaee, in which every living ereature was eaught and eonsumed and ehanged to ashes. The tide of war has rolled on, and left it a blaekened waste, a smoking ruin, wherein not so much as a mouse may ereep or a bird may nestle. It is gone, and its plaee can know it nevermore.

Nevermore. But who is there to eare? It was but as a leaf which the great storm swept away as it passed.

